

An exploration of the Scottish Women's Premier  
League 2016 league restructure: Forming  
recommendations for future development.



Abertay  
University

A thesis submitted for the degree of Master's by  
Research (MbR)

by

Lewis Melee

School of Social and Health Sciences,  
Abertay University.

July, 2017

## **Declaration**

Candidate's declarations:

I, Lewis Melee, hereby certify that this thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of [Master's by Research (MbR)], Abertay University, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This work has not been submitted for any other qualification at any other academic institution.

Signed:

Date: 10.07.2017

Supervisor's declaration:

I, Rhiannon Lord, hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate for the degree of Master's by Research in Abertay University and that the candidate is qualified to submit this thesis in application for that degree.

Signed

Date: 10.07.2017

## **Certificate of Approval**

I certify that this is a true and accurate version of the thesis approved by the examiners, and that all relevant ordinance regulations have been fulfilled.

Supervisor

Date: 10.07.2017

## Table of Contents

<b>Declaration .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>List of Figures .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Abstract .....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>Abbreviations .....</b>	<b>vii</b>
<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
Scottish Women's Football .....	2
Research on Women's Football .....	4
An Outline of the Research .....	5
<b>Literature Review .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Football and Modern Society .....	7
League Structures in football.....	9
Women in sport .....	12
Women in Football .....	14
Bourdieu .....	19
Bourdieu in Sport .....	19
Bourdieu in Football .....	20
Field.....	21
Capital.....	22
Habitus.....	23
Bourdieu as a framework for understanding SWPL .....	24
Summary .....	24
<b>Methodology.....</b>	<b>25</b>
The Research Design.....	25
Participants, Sampling & Recruitment .....	26
Interviews .....	28
Data Collection .....	30

Data processing, analysis & representation .....	31
Reflection on Ethical Challenges.....	34
<b>Discussion of Findings .....</b>	<b>36</b>
Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League .....	37
Implementation of the New League Structure.....	41
The Physical Demands of SWPL1 .....	43
Expanding SWPL1.....	47
SWPL Fixtures and Criteria .....	49
Removal of the Split.....	51
Criteria for SWPL1 .....	52
SWF Competition.....	55
Long-term League Targets .....	58
Youth Development .....	60
Club Status .....	60
Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football.....	62
Game Direction .....	64
The next phase of Scottish women's Football.....	65
<b>Conclusion .....</b>	<b>67</b>
Future Research.....	70
<b>Reference List .....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>85</b>

## **List of Figures**

Figure 1: A Visualisation of the Scottish women's football structure pre 2016 alteration

Figure 2: Overview of Four Major Themes

Figure 3: Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League

Figure 4: The implementation process of the new SWPL

Figure 5: Scottish Women's Premier League Fixtures and Criteria

Figure 6: Scottish Women's Premier League Fixture Schedule pre / post restructure

Figure 7: Long-term League Targets (SWPL)

Figure 8: Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football

## **Acknowledgements**

This Master's by Research could not have been completed without the continuous support and from a number of individuals. I would like to express my gratefulness to;

- My Research Supervisor Rhiannon Lord. Thank you for your continued support, motivation and enthusiasm towards my development through this research and my academic career.
- My family. A massive thank you for your patience and backing throughout this project. It has motivated me to work hard and chase my goals every day.
- The research participants. I would like to acknowledge all of those who participated within my study, your contribution towards this research study was phenomenal. I hope this research inspires further passion for the game we all adore.

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore how the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) restructure has been viewed and experienced by key stakeholders, specifically SWPL1 Club Managers / Head Coaches and Captain / Vice-Captains. Eight Club Managers / Head Coaches (7 Male 1 Female) and six Club Captains / Vice-Captains (6 Female) participated in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all participants and these were thematically analysed. The results of this research identified four themes: 'Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League'; 'SWPL Fixtures and Criteria'; 'Long-term League Targets'; 'Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football'. The findings of this study suggest the SWPL1 restructure was viewed positively by all stakeholders. However, there were a number of areas for further improvement, specifically the designated direction of Scottish women's football and the move towards professionalism with a strategic plan supporting further change required. This research offers recommendations to those adopting structural change in the future. From the findings identified within this research it is suggested further research is conducted to explore Scottish Women's Football.

**Keywords;** Scottish women's football, League restructure, Football development, Interviews, Bourdieu

## **Abbreviations**

<b>Euro 2017</b>	Women's European Championships 2017
<b>FAI</b>	Football Association Ireland
<b>FAWSL</b>	Football Association Women's Super League (England)
<b>FIFA</b>	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
<b>SFA</b>	Scottish Football Association
<b>SWF</b>	Scottish Women's Football (Managing organisation)
<b>SWNT</b>	Scottish Women's National Team
<b>SWPL</b>	Scottish Women's Premier League
<b>SWPL 1</b>	Scottish Women's Premier League 1
<b>SWPL 2</b>	Scottish Women's Premier League 2
<b>UEFA</b>	The Union of European Football Associations
<b>WW1</b>	World War 1



## **Introduction**

This research project derives from my own journey within sport and Scottish Football. Therefore, it seems prudent to acknowledge the positioning of my own voice within this research at the outset. I have an active involvement in Scottish professional football (Men's) and have previously volunteered in Scottish women's football as a First Team Coach and Match Analyst between 2013-2016. My positions within Scottish women's football started following a successful period as Head Coach of an Under 13 girls team in 2013. A coach role became available within the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) squad, which I volunteered to deliver between 2014-2016 before moving to another SWPL club to work as a First Team Analyst for season 2016.

My 2016 role as first team match analyst provided me with first-hand experience of the SWPL1 league restructure. I was involved in 21 SWPL games and cup competitions, thus I saw the differences between the old and new structures. Discussions with fellow and opposition coaches built a picture of the strengths and weaknesses attached to the existing structure and the game more broadly; a game which both myself and others are invested in and care for greatly.

Although I have left this role, I maintain a huge interest and attachment to Scottish women's football, the clubs I worked for and those working within the Scottish women's football community. I continue to spend a lot of time with coaches and partnership colleagues at the Scottish Football Association (SFA). These relationships are the underlying motivation for this research.

## Scottish Women's Football

With the rise of Scottish women's football evident in participation levels, a number of Scottish football clubs have created or further developed women's and girl's sections. The Scottish women's game within five years has gained a 112% increase in participants (FIFA 2016), with over 10,000 registered players (The SFA 2016). SWPL1 teams even with the association to professional male clubs have amateur / semi-professional status. In March 2016 the SWPL undertook a major reorganisation of their league structure. The principle of the restructure was to reduce the number of teams in the top division from twelve to eight (Figure 1). Prior to this change, Glasgow City FC had won their ninth SWPL title in a row, dominating the domestic league and cup competitions and producing a gap between the top club and their competitors.

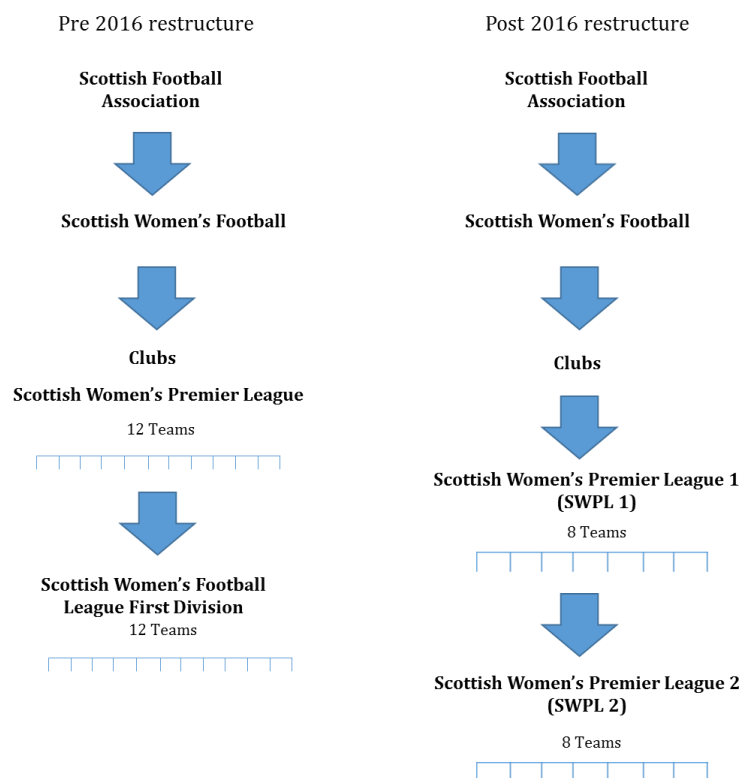


Figure 1: A Visualisation of the Scottish women's football structure pre 2016 alteration

The league re-structure led to fixture alteration whereby teams now play each other on three occasions. In the previous SWPL, until 2016, clubs competed within a split league. Depending on their position within the league at the halfway point of the season, they would play clubs of a similar ranking once at home and once away in the second half of the season. The new structure was implemented ahead of the 2016 season (March and October) with Scotland operating one of the smallest leagues in European women's football with the top two divisions each containing eight clubs. Scottish women's football has eight leagues and eighty-four senior teams. The largest and smallest leagues consist of thirteen and seven<sup>1</sup> (Scot Women's Football 2017). As a small population of players exists within Scottish women's football, heavy competition for players, specifically elite players is present. Growth in the women's game has led to greater levels of widespread player migration as new levels of professionalism emerge across Europe (Pfister, Klein and Tiesler 2014; Williams 2013). The continual loss of talented players to full time professional teams also brings difficulties with the replacement of these players. The clubs at the top of the table will hire the most talented players and weaker clubs the next best. If the participation population is small, there is liable to be a significant difference in ability between the best players and the remainder recruited.

---

<sup>1</sup> Under SWPL1 & SWPL2 are Division 1 North, Division 1 South, Division 2 North, Division 2 West, Division 2 Central and Division 2 East.

This is what generates competitive imbalance (Flores, Forrest, and Tena 2010).

In September 2016 the Scotland Women's National team (SWNT) successfully qualified for the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) Women's European Championships in 2017 (Euro 2017), the first time the country has reached a major tournament. Following the implementation of new league structure, notable club performance in European competition and significant national achievements, this is an ideal period to assess Scottish women's football. In particular, the role, if any the new league structure has had on developing national achievements.

### **Research on Women's Football**

There is an increasing body of work on women's football. A collection of performance based studies assessing the physiological and biomechanical benefits and challenges for women in football have emerged (e.g., Campo et al. 2009; Nilstad et al. 2014). Women in football are increasingly skilled and developing skills and tactics that are more sophisticated, making the sport fast and entertaining. However, this has not encouraged a significant increase in media coverage (Woodward 2017). In addition, social scientists have increasingly focussed their attention on women's football. For example, Caudwell (2013; 2016) provides a critical approach football cultures (2013) and assessed the level of sexism present within football, specifically the level of discrimination within the game today (2016). Research on women's football worldwide adds value and knowledge about the sport, which contributes towards increased publicity.

To date, academic knowledge of Scottish women's football is limited to a small collection of work by MacBeth (2002; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2008). Her studies offer a comprehensive historical overview of Scottish women's football, commentary on socialisation into football and experiences of being part of the Scottish women's football subculture. This work raises a number of questions about why female players retire from Scottish football or choose to move to another nation. Perceived challenges attached to Scottish women's football are detailed within Macbeth (2002) in relation to professionalisation and most recently Melee and Lord (In review) who identify profesionalisation as priority alongside sponsorship income and transfer systems as areas for growth. Research on women's football in Scotland is limited. There have been significant changes in the game within the past 3 years and therefore experiences of women in Scottish football need to be (re)-considered.

### **An Outline of the Research**

This research will contribute to the work of Macbeth (2002; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2008), and literature on women's football more generally, by further developing knowledge on the role the SFA (and other partner organisations) have had in contributing towards the development of women's football in Scotland. Scottish women's football has not been explored in any depth since 2008 (Macbeth 2008). However, there have been significant changes to the nature of Scottish women's football in this time, most notably the recent league restructure. There is an increasing popular and academic interest in

women's football (Caudwell 2013). However, research on Scottish women's football, particularly its contemporary form is scarce. The aim of this study was to explore how the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) restructure has been viewed and experienced by key stakeholders, specifically SWPL1 Club Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains. The underlying objectives associated with this aim were to:

- Add to knowledge on Scottish women's football, specifically capturing the experiences of those playing and working within this group.
- Provide a platform for stakeholders in Scottish women's football to voice their thoughts and desires for current and future game development.
- Produce recommendations for structural change within Scottish women's football.

## **Literature Review**

### **Football and Modern Society**

Football is a cultural phenomenon (Knoch 2002). Often termed 'the people's game' (Brown 1998), football has become a global passion (Morrow 2013). It provides a forum for expression of collective identities (Bromberger 1995) and is recognised as a means for promoting social inclusion in our day-to-day lives (McDowell 2013; Tacon 2007). However, football has not always championed social change. Early connotations of the game between 13<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century produced a matchup of indeterminate numbers where marauding bands of men tested their strength and displayed their prowess in pursuit of a football (Walvin 1975). As passion for the game developed through the increased leisure time available to the population and opportunity for access due to the share of wealth following industrialisation, interest and potential income elevated the games importance (Vamplew 2004). Football has become part of popular culture (Wagg 2004). England was the birthplace of the modern professional game of association football, but due to its place in peoples' lives it is viewed as more than a game (Cox, Russell, and Vamplew 2002). The creation of a national association steadily supported further development and from the mid 1870's popularity in Britain grew; there was vast expansion in participation numbers and clubs connected to regional football associations (Taylor 2013).

The level of development in recent decades has altered the game once more. The Hillsborough disaster (1989) and a significant financial influence through television broadcasts has changed the game. The football experience in Britain accepted overhaul which moved the game from its historic roots, altering ownership of the 'people's game' completely (Johnes and Mason 2003). The acceptance of football's economic base does not remove the social nature as football remains an important figure as a social phenomenon (Morrow 2003).

Research assessing the history of football has to rely on an unconvincing picture of football within Scotland (Taylor 2013). Therefore providing a full historical account is challenging. As current study focuses on Scottish football, specifically Scottish women's football further research will contribute towards this account. Current literature focuses on the 'old firm' rivalry and levels of sectarianism attached to this (McMenemy, Poulter and O'Loan 2005), leaving a gap in relation to the game's history and development. The attachment and respect held for national associations has lost its way as association football has been appropriated with it now belonging to those who care little for its heritage or previously acknowledged social meaning (Wagg 2004).

Football at home and abroad has evolved and developed over the past century and is positioned at a central point of mens' lives, particularly working-class men (Cox, Russel and Vamplew 2002). Women during this evolution have been largely excluded. This has had implications for the



development of the women's football, including Scottish women's football (Macbeth 2007).

### **League Structures in football**

This research assesses the success of the SWPL restructure in 2016. League restructures are important in any sport, particularly female sport as social, cultural and historical issues have influenced progression of women's sport (Houlihan and Malcolm 2015). Developing interest in women's sport, by making competition more balanced and exciting is crucial for women's sport to grow.

Structural change within a league usually incorporates contraction or expansion. Several football leagues have debated contraction whereby a league shrinks through expelling members who do not want to withdraw and or have not violated any league rules (Noll 2003). The announcement in 1992 by the men's Scottish Premier League clubs to resign and form a new Scottish first division, excluding Celtic FC and Glasgow Rangers FC due to their dominance is a prime example (Noll 2003). These clubs had excelled and outgrown the Scottish league system. This blocked their international development as football and commercial institutions as they could demonstrate large-scale economic capital, far greater than their domestic opposition (Giulianotti 2003).

The impact of alteration in league structure on attendances in professional team sports has been a topic of interest for sports governing bodies.

Proposals for restructure are often motivated by feeling that change would

improve match attendances (Dobson, Goddard and Wilson 2001). The uncertainty of individual matches and attractiveness of the games prize remains as a determinant of attendance (Dobson, Goddard and Wilson 2001). With the potential for promotion or relegation, teams are motivated to invest, ensuring a high level of squad quality (Ross and Szymanski 2002). The demand for structure alteration can also arise within pursuit of increased television and admission revenues (King 2002) as wider coverage can result in significant exposure. Such exposure could deliver private benefits to the league and clubs with increased revenue from sponsorship and the attraction of new supporters from beyond the (local) catchment (Allan and Roy 2008). However, the media and level of television time designated to the league may drive attendances lower as preference is given towards viewing at home with action replays and expert analysis in opposition to the cold (Cameron 2010). However, the reduction of elite level teams reduces the opportunity for players to compete within the top division, potentially discouraging future participation for younger generations (Melee and Lord, In Review).

In Scotland, men's football league attendances fell consistently from 1950 onwards and escalated further following 1976 structural changes (Jennett 1984), ultimately reducing the income of clubs. A decision to replace the original structure was taken in an attempt to improve 'the product' (that is Scottish men's football) and attraction to attending (Cairns 1987). The change received mixed reviews as the 1966-1976 period was arguably the greatest in Scottish football history with victory at Wembley and Celtic FC

securing the 1967 European cup (Donnelly, Donnelly and Donnelly 2008). The Scottish Premier League was altered to host twelve teams in season 2000/2001 and this structure remains today (Scottish Professional Football League 2016). As these are the only changes made over the last 40 years in the Scottish Professional Football League, this highlights the lack of structural change that has occurred, specifically under SFA governance.

The re-structure and rebranding of competition is favoured within women's football worldwide with Denmark and specifically Australia operating to establish connections between large participation levels and greater stakeholder interest (Cortsen 2016). The alteration or creation of competition frequently follows dominance of one club or clubs for a sustained period. Change can revive the game and is frequently used to remove negative connotations previously known to exist in women's football (Lock, Darcy and Taylor 2009). For example, large score lines and uncompetitive domestic competition became commonplace within Scottish women's football prior to the 2016 restructure (Appendix 1).

Women's football has consistently faced a challenge in gaining media recognition, (Bell and Blakey 2010; Ravel and Gareau 2016). For example, women's football in Germany suggests that without a more serious culture and social standing, it allowed a relatively autonomous development that was largely free from 'official' directives and controls. Thus, German women's football was able to profit from the initiative of a small number of football enthusiasts and was played at a lower standard technically but with

greater player enjoyment (Pfister 2003). As a result of increased participation rates, success in world events and improved position within media women's sport is becoming increasingly professionalised (Woodward 2017) thereby increasing the economic capital attached (Hoffmann et al. 2006). Elite women's football is showcased through the UEFA Women's Champions League leading to professional and semi-professional leagues existing on every continent (McCormack and Walseth 2013). The development of women's football leagues around the world is still in its infancy and having professional or well-structured leagues is one of the challenges facing women's football today (FIFA 2016). There is now an increased obligation for female football teams to build relationships with football clubs and this trend has historically had a significant impact on women's teams (Dunn and Welford 2015). A number of professional (male) football clubs wish to place a women's team under their brand and this is evidenced by investment in the English Football Association Women's Super League (FAWSL) and in France.

### **Women in sport**

Women's experience in all sports, not just football, replicates their broader social experience; they have been treated as not only different to men, but also inferior (Bourke 2003). The progression of women in sport has been hindered as initial entry arrived only through the role of spectator. Women became viewers of boxing, horse races and rowing through their male partners' influence long before any participation in sport began (Park 1994). Women's participation in sporting activity during the 19th century was guided by medical science with Victorian myth suggesting women would

suffer physical reproductive damage should they attempt exercise (Cahn 1994; Houlihan and Malcolm 2015; Scratton and Flintoff 2002).

As the number of sports suited to female participation increased, it was noted that gaining entry into masculine sports, specifically those including physical contact and a ball (e.g., football) was more prolonged and difficult (Hjelm and Olofsson 2003). However, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the sports recommended for women in Europe, particularly Germany, were ball games whereby the ball was only allowed to move following a kicking action (Tomlinson and Young 2006). The earlier acceptance of football as a form of exercise leads to a greater foundation for future developments in German football. Because of this early acceptance, structures have existed for longer with wider opportunity for participation.

After World War 1 (WW1) controversy arose over women's participation in sporting competition yet again. The decision on women's participation in sport belonged to men and the removal of athletic competitions for women in sport was favourable (Pfister 2003). However, increasing numbers of women took up athletics, which were later added to their Olympic programme in 1928 as the 1920s experienced an upsurge of women's participation in sport (Pfister 2003). Male privilege remained and was elevated across all sporting activity. Today women operate within (semi) professional sport status, performing in league structures and competitions worldwide. The popularisation of team sports has advanced significantly following women's success in individual sports such as tennis and golf

(Leeds and Leeds 2013). Women are large consumers of sport and whilst professional sport status has not yet reached the heights of male sport women populate recreational sporting activity and continue their spectatorship presence (Houlihan and Malcolm 2015).

### **Women in Football**

Changes in social attitudes toward women and sport post WW1, media coverage and the role of football governing bodies have contributed to the development of women's football (MacBeth 2002). There are three key periods for the development in women's football, the 19th-20th century, post WW1 and the last decade when professionalism has risen. Both Williamson (1991) and McCuaig (2000) convey the 1890s as an important decade as women's football matches evolved in an organised manner.

Women's football in Scotland has operated for a longer period of time in comparison to elsewhere in Britain (MacBeth 2002). It did not develop in response to or in parallel with developments in the rest of British football. The first notable reference to women's football in Scotland, at least in a modern format, was an early eighteenth century annual match between married and single women of Caledonia. The game attracted large interest with male spectators (Williamson 1991). The first match played within SFA guidelines of women's games took place in 1892 with media holding an exclusive role in portraying women's football to wider society (McCuaig 2000). The negative reaction towards these matches reinforced attitudes towards women participating in sport, particularly male sports such as football. For example, in 1902 member clubs were warned not to facilitate

charitable matches against "ladies teams" (Williamson 1991). Many in the footballing establishment and throughout Scottish society regarded participation of women in football with contempt, a key component in the games rate of development (Macbeth 2002).

Growth in women's football occurred pre and post WW1 amongst working class factory workers. During wartime, women contributed towards war efforts and participation in football was a welcome distraction from the hardship and monotony associated with this work (Macbeth 2007). The expansion of women's football was more evident in Britain than anywhere else with Scotland in particular having teams placed in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Renfrew and Rutherglen (Williams 2013a).

The conclusion of WW1 has a direct link to the peak of women's football in the 20th century through the increase of workplace teams created and the level of spectator attraction (Williams 2003). Governing bodies were however instrumental in denying the women's game the chance to thrive. A dispute following a match in 1921 led to a ban and alteration in facility access for women's football which also restricted structural growth and income levels (MacBeth 2007). The development of state agenda to return Britain back to pre-war norms led to attacks on the level of dominance women's football had gained through media, educationalists, medical professions and the Football Association (Melling 1999). Wartime women's football had threatened the male game, shifting popularity from male to female football (Davies 2014). Such organised exclusion, leading to a

minimalistic image of women's football was powerful. A lack of role models and acceptance of women footballers influenced participation levels, particularly in young players. Women's football became an activity of the past having served a purpose during war for entertainment and charitable support, emphasising male domination of football once more. The ban was adopted by Scottish society. Because of this, records on Scottish women's football in the following decade are scarce with reference given only to the rejected applications made to the SFA (MacBeth 2007). The ban was lifted in November 1971 ending 50 years of exclusion (Williams 2003). However, due to these historic roots, football has been and continues to be perceived as a male domain (Caudwell 2002; 2013; Pfister et al. 2002). Therefore, greater consideration of women's participation and competition is required. In 1971 UEFA recommended the women's game should be governed under the control of the national association, and so the Scottish Women's Football Association was formed (MacBeth 2002). However, the move to become affiliated to the SFA was not fully made until 1974 as support for the development of women's football was low (MacBeth 2002). Women's football lacked the cultural capital needed for momentum. For example, participation for many young women was ruled out during school with boys dominating playground football space and refusing girls to participate (Harris 2002). It was through football, positioned at the top of the playground hierarchy, in membership and space domination that the construction of hegemonic masculinity was achieved (Renold 1997). The emphasis of male dominance and subordination of women had developed (Connell and Connell 2005). Yet, the 1990's saw radical change in the way



women's football was played as players athletic abilities and competencies improved. Players technical and tactical skills also improved, thus increasing the tempo of play (Tomlinson and Young 2006).

Opportunities to become a professional women's player remain limited. A small number of professional players face strain in attempts to grow their physical capital and value as footballers. This is due to the demands on players to work for economic capital following their playing careers (McCormack and Walseth 2013). Economic capital within women's football has not yet reached the heights of the professional men's game meaning preparations post-retirement for female players becomes even more important as there is little opportunity to conserve funds, while females are in their playing career (Agergaard and Tiesler 2014). There are few women worldwide able to transfer the physical and social capital from their playing careers into well-paid opportunities as coaches and administrators after they retire (McCormack and Walseth 2013). Thus, more strategic direction and association support is now required to drive the game into a professional setting, specifically in Scotland (Melee and Lord, In Review).

Transitions from amateurism to professionalism in women's sport is scarcely discussed; instead focus is directed towards the sportsmen already placed within the professional environment, the risk of injury attached to female sports participation (Silvers and Mandelbaum 2007) and gender inequality (Trolan 2013). A number of sports leagues, football in particular, contain amateur teams with a professional facility, qualified coaches and

formal training commitments. The movement to professionalism from amateur status is challenging. For example, players with shift employment cannot attend training and their clubs cannot compensate for the loss of income (Gilenstam, Karp and Henriksson- Larsen 2008). The economic capital gained from moving into professional status may actually fall short of current income levels, particularly in female sport due to clubs inadequate spectator attendance, minimal television coverage and pressure from male sports team owners who do not want to add expense for no return (Schell and Rodriguez 2000).

Despite these challenges, the perception of women's football is changing with greater media coverage, financial backing and global interest (Hong and Mangan 2004; Magee et al. 2008). The term woman football player is more respected and no longer perceived as nothing more than a novelty (Macbeth 2002). Yet the legacy of pivotal moments and construction of male sporting heroes in the history of men's football are largely absent in women's football, and so the game is still attempting to establish placement (Woodward 2017). Thus, review of the recent restructure of Scottish women's football league is worthy of exploration in order to gauge its reception and initial impact on the development of women's football in Scotland.

## **Bourdieu**

The work of Pierre Bourdieu has been used to understand women in sport and sport structures. For example, Brown (2006) assesses the embodiment of gender relations in sport and physical culture and Kitchen and Howe (2013) view professional sport structures. Therefore, Bourdieu's work will be used throughout this research to frame analysis and contextualise the SWPL restructure. Bourdieu's theoretical ideas were developed to overcome the theoretical divisions of structure and agency which he deemed responsible for producing a limited understanding of social life (Applerouth and Edles 2016). Through his work, concepts such as cultural and symbolic capital, fields and habitus have all emerged (Tomlinson 2004). He also acknowledged the social significance of sport, drawing upon these concepts (Brown 2005; Light and Kirk 2000; Tomlinson 2004; Zevenbergen, Edwards, and Skinner 2002).

## ***Bourdieu in Sport***

In *Distinction* (Bourdieu 1984), focus is placed on 'class distribution of the various sports' and the symbolic function of sport as a translator of social differences into the logic of 'the field'. Bourdieu acknowledged the importance of sport and body management practices with respect to accumulation and display of cultural capital (1978; 1984), the engagement in particular sports and the operation and presentation of the body (Warde 2006).

### ***Bourdieu in Football***

Bourdieu's work has been applied to a number of social studies of football. Christensen (2009) explores talent identification in football by top-level coaches as a sociological phenomenon which incorporates their "practical sense" (Bourdieu 1998). Research assessing power, discourse and symbolic violence in professional youth football (Cushion and Jones 2006, p.142) refers to Bourdieu's habitus work with "good players" displaying "a habitus similar to that established by coaches". Peachey, et al (2011) assessed the impact of street soccer on volunteer coaches in the USA in relation to social capital growth. This research found that volunteering fostered the preconditions for and actual social capital development and contributed to the concept of using sport to aid social capital development. The understanding and community feeling between different social groups, greater community cohesion and more inclusive social capital can be developed (Peachey et al. 2011). Finally, interpretation of player, coach and club relationship holds parallels with theory of Bourdieu in relation to body control and discipline (Giulianotti 1999). Holden and Wilde (2004) assessed the impact of football clubs on social exclusion with this known to be a set of correlated effects of the distribution of economic, social and cultural capital. An understanding of social exclusion and the potential role of football is, itself a form of cultural capital that will have different values to the various actors. This collection of work, has used Bourdieu's concepts of capital, habitus and field to form an understanding of the complexities associated with football culture, governance and structure and how this plays out in individuals' lives.

Thus, this theoretical framework provides a set of paradigmatic lenses to aid understanding of the research findings in the current study.

### ***Field***

Field is the structured arena of conflict which enables connection between the actions of habitus and the structures of power in modern society (Swartz 2012). Bourdieu defines field as a relatively autonomous network of objective relations between positions, in particular, social space of institutions and forces (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992). Fields have their own structures, interests, preferences and 'rules of the game' with socially marked interests, agents and power relationships constituting fields (Lingard and Christie 2003).

Bourdieu viewed fields as socially constituted areas of activity, acknowledging the economic, political, educational field (Lingard and Christie 2003). As with habitus, fields are also sexually differentiated, with gender oppositions inscribed in the structures of fields and their logics of practice (Lingard and Christie 2003). For example, the growth of professionalism in women's football worldwide has increased the cultural capital of women in football which leads to alteration of the overall organisational field of women's football. These concepts will assist in discussion of this progress and movement towards professionalism in Scotland.

### ***Capital***

Capital can occur in a number of forms- economic (can be transferred into money), cultural (an individual's educational or professional criteria), social (social position and connections), symbolic (Calhoun 1995; Ritzer 1996), and physical (the development of bodies in ways recognised as valuable) (Shilling 1997). Capital becomes symbolic when it is recognised as legitimate and powerful, while different fields have different symbolic capital (Lingard and Christie 2003). The concept of social capital emphasises conflicts and the power function (social relations that increase the ability of an actor to advance her/his interests). Social capital becomes a resource in the social struggles that are carried out in different social arenas or fields (Siisiainen 2003). The volume of social capital possessed by any individual is measured by the 'size of the network of connections' and the amount of economic, cultural and social capital possessed (Bourdieu 1986). This research utilises the experiences and future thoughts of Managers and Head Coaches who possess substantial capital, which affords them status and position within the hierarchy of the field of Scottish women's football. This research relied upon the theory of capital to demonstrate the levels held by players, coaches and Managers throughout.

## ***Habitus***

Habitus is important in the analysis of embodied practices providing a tool for thoughts on how social relations are internalised and experienced as 'natural' and how social position is demonstrated through our accumulated cultural capital (Noble and Watkins 2003). It is in relation to particular fields that habitus becomes active (Lingard and Christie 2003). Habitus was developed to incorporate the objective structures of society and the subjective role of agents within it as habitus itself is a set of dispositions, reflexes and forms of behaviour which people acquire in society (Bourdieu 2000). The habitus that an individual gains, is the sense of placement in the world and opinion which allows understanding of one's own actions and the actions of others, providing reflection of the different positions people have in society (Applerouth and Edles 2016 p.461). Habitus plays a part in how society produces itself but change also appears as conflict exists within society. Individuals can find their expectations and ways of living are abnormal in relation to the new social position they move into following change (Bourdieu 2000). Examples of habitual practices in football include handshakes between both teams prior to the match. This develops a culture of professionalism and fair play at all levels; in essence, its part of what football is.

### ***Bourdieu as a framework for understanding SWPL***

The setting (field) for the league is a social arena that holds unique rules and regularities (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992). These regularities manage the relationships between the field stakeholders (e.g. fans, players, coaches, teams, owners, governing bodies, media, and commercial sponsors) and determine the structure of the league (Kitchin and Howe 2013). Kay and Laberge (2002; 2002a) have demonstrated that governing bodies implement strategies to improve the sports appeal to both new participants and also broadcast and commercial partners. These alterations effectively facilitated the change in habitus that led to greater corporate participation, but contributed to the marginalisation of the sport's traditional participants.

### **Summary**

To date, academic knowledge of Scottish women's football is limited to a small collection of work by MacBeth (2002; 2004; 2005; 2007; 2008) and most recently Melee and Lord (In review). Collectively these studies provide a detailed historical account of Scottish women's football, commentary on socialisation into football and experiences within the Scottish women's football and some assessment of the transition towards professionalism. Research assessing contemporary developments in Scottish women's football and the future direction of the game are not present, something which the current study will address.



## **Methodology**

### **The Research Design**

The aim of this study was to explore how the recent restructure of the Scottish Women's Premier League has been received through the use of interviews with current SWPL1 Club Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains. This study had an exploratory focus, and therefore, qualitative methods, specifically with semi-structured interviews, were utilised within a naturalistic setting to gather rich, in-depth data linked to the experiences of those within SWPL1. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to discover a basic form of salient points in situations where there is currently insufficient prior work (Luborksy and Lysack 2017). Scottish women's football remains a heavily under researched area and therefore qualitative methods have been selected to support the generation of new information.

Qualitative research is a broad term for a variety of approaches used to develop new knowledge from the world, which people live and generate experience within. This interest leads researchers into natural settings where they remain open to viewing new methods and ways in which to build new ideas (Luborksy and Lysack 2017). Qualitative research aims to capture aspects of the social world (King and Horrocks 2010) and takes the researcher's communication with the field and its members as an explicit part of knowledge (Flick 2009). Qualitative researchers focus their research on exploring, examining and describing people within their natural environments (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2001). Semi-structured

interviews have been chosen for this research as this method allows the interviewee a degree of freedom to explain their thoughts and to highlight the areas of interest and expertise they hold (Horton, Macve and Struyven 2004). Interpretivist theoretical perspectives utilising qualitative methods and the adoption of an inductive approach, provided access to individuals' subjective perceptions and explanations of their experiences (Low 2012). Qualitative research methodologies are often associated to the interpretative paradigm where realities are multiple, individually or socially constructed and all entities are continually shaping each other (Bradley and Postlethwaite 2003).

### **Participants, Sampling & Recruitment**

Fourteen participants took part on this study. They were eight Club Managers / Head Coaches (7 Male and 1 Female) and six Captains / Vice-Captains of SWPL1 2016 aged between 22 and 40 (Appendix 2). Purposive sampling was adopted, a technique employed frequently in qualitative research (Palinkas et al. 2015). Thus, informants who had specific knowledge of the research topic were selected (Curtis et al. 2000). The logic and power of purposive sampling is held in the selection process, in particular the move to select information-rich cases for study. An information rich case can be defined as the opportunity where one can learn from another a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton 1990; 2002). Purposive sampling is a collective term for a number of sampling methods which can be drawn upon to select information cases. In this study criterion sampling was the main method adopted. Criterion sampling opens by stating explicit inclusion / exclusion

criteria which includes specifications for methodological rigour (Suri 2011). In this study interviewees from the top level of women's football in Scotland were selected as they are privy to knowledge of change and how further alterations may be implemented. To meet the aim and objectives of this research, all participants adhered to the following criteria of holding the role of Club Manager, Head Coach, Captain and Vice-captain within an SWPL1 club for the duration of the SWPL1 2016 season (March to October 2016). This criterion was applied to ensure information rich interviewees who could provide detailed knowledge and thoughts on the research topic. Convenience sampling was also used as the researcher held an existing relationship with a number of Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains through a position within a SWPL1 club.

Following ethical approval from Abertay University Ethics Committee (see Appendix 3) potential participants were initially approached through email (Appendix 4) or contacted through the researcher's position at their Football Club. All potential participants received a participant information sheet (Appendix 5), voluntary informed consent form (Appendix 6) and a request to meet for an interview (Appendix 4). Furthermore, the email asked if the potential interviewee had any questions in relation to the study. Prior to contact with Captains and Vice-Captains the researcher requested permission for interview via an email to the players club (Appendix 7). A request was sent to the club contacts through the details provided on club websites or Managers / Head Coaches who had previously participated within this research.

Gaining access to top level football players and managers normally presents significant difficulties for researchers (Kelly 2008). Professional football, is a notoriously closed social world and largely for this reason has been the subject of relatively few academic studies.

## **Interviews**

This study undertook fourteen semi-structured interviews (Eight Club Managers / Head Coaches and Six Captains / Vice-Captains) from the SWPL1 2016 season. As this research had an exploratory focus, qualitative methods with semi-structured interviews were utilised within a naturalistic setting to gather rich, in-depth data. Semi-structured interviews provided flexibility that allowed the researcher to alter questions and the areas discussed during the interview to gain clarification or to probe further reasoning (Leedy and Ormrod 2010). The interviewer could address single aspects unique to the individual participant and through this adaption a greater understanding of the research question was achieved (Fylan 2005). A balanced relationship developed between interviewee and researcher during the interview (Hand 2003) encouraging disclosure, trust and awareness of potential ethical issues (Orb, Eisenhauer and Wynaden 2001). The balance of control and designation of a segment to interviewees allowed new information on the topic of study to emerge. The reciprocal nature of interviews enabled this emergence (Galletta 2013).

Through semi-structured interviews, predetermined questions identified by the researcher were asked in relation to the topic. This guided the conversation through topics of interest establishing further details and

opinions. This enabled the interview to hone in on emergent directions leading to knowledge of issues within Scottish women's football and the game in general being displayed.

Previous work related to this research topic has used semi-structured interviews to successfully obtain rich in-depth data of player views (e.g. Scraton et al. 1999; MacBeth 2004), Managers views (Melee and Lord, In Review) and combined professional manager and player views (Kelly 2008). These examples informed the justification for this method in the current study.

Interviews have been criticised for a lack of efficiency as more time is required in gathering data from individuals rather than groups. Following structured interview there is no opportunity to confirm or disconfirm personal values and attitudes attached to the events discussed by the interviewee (Lysack and Luborsky 2006). Further exploration of information deemed important by the interviewee was explored through semi-structured interviews as there is no rigid enforcement of the interview structure throughout (Fylan 2005). For example, discussion relating to the long-term development of Scottish women's football appeared throughout data collection with deeper explanation and questioning utilised by the researcher to grasp a higher level of information detailing future change. Following in-depth analysis of the challenges associated to semi-structured interviews (Sparkes and Smith 2013), the researcher took steps to minimise potential complications associated with unrelated topics being generated

and discussed. To minimise this, an interview schedule was used during this study (Appendix 8 & 9).

### **Data Collection**

Following agreement of participation, interviews were arranged for a mutually agreed venue and time. The researcher always suggested going to the interviewee as this removed pressures of travelling for them (as suggested by King and Horrocks 2010). Interviews took place either in a club house, work facility, university or café. Prior to the interview, a reminder of the key points outlined in the participant information sheet was provided and a further opportunity to ask questions was given. If the participant was happy to proceed, written informed consent was received from the interviewee through completion of the form provided (Appendix 6). The interviews lasted between 32 and 95 minutes and were recorded on a dictaphone. Within the interview process, some minor challenges arose with staff interruptions and recording quality within public areas, these were recorded in transcripts with an explanation describing each. Consideration of sensitive matters such as managerial change or cup defeat was taken when shaping questions ahead of each interview in conjunction with each interviewee's football career.

An interview schedule was used to guide the discussion (Appendix 8 & 9).

Within the interview the same core questions to begin and conclude discussions were used for each individual interview with these used to discover their current role and career in Scottish women's football.

However, a small number of specific questions attached to an individual's

experience or role were included. For example discussion of participation within the UEFA Women's Champions League. The questions posed to Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains covered a range of issues related to their feelings attached to Scottish women's football, recent re-structures both on and off the field, comparison to other football nations and their general experiences. Following the final question, the researcher thanked the interviewee for their time and wished them well ahead of season 2017.

Fourteen semi-structured interviews were undertaken lasting between 32-95 minutes. In total 11 hours and 49 minutes of rich in-depth data was gathered about participant experiences of the SWPL, with each recorded on a digital dictaphone. Participants were forthcoming with their opinions and experiences due to the pre-existing relationship and common level of social capital they had with the interviewer.

### **Data processing, analysis & representation**

Following completion of the interviews, data was transcribed and assessed for accuracy against the audio recordings. An inductive thematic analysis was then conducted. Inductive analysis is a process of coding the data without trying to fit it into a pre-existing coding frame, or the researcher's preconceptions (Braun and Clarke 2006). Qualitative research frequently adopts this form of reasoning (Hall et al. 2012; Ricciardelli, McCabe and Ridge 2006; Sinden et al 2013). Thematic analysis is defined as a search for emerging themes important to phenomena under study (Daly, Kellehear and Gliksman 1997). It highlights similarities and differences across the data set

(Braun and Clarke 2006). It is a method for identifying, analysing and interpreting meanings or themes in qualitative data (Braun and Clarke 2006; Braun, Clarke and Terry 2014). This procedure is appropriate for the current study as it assesses diversity and a range of experiences (Braun and Clarke 2006).

In this research Braun and Clarke's (2006) six step framework for conducting a thematic analysis was used as a guide. Firstly, the data was transcribed and assessed for (in)-accuracies. A reflective research journal was used as the researcher noted statements of significance and recorded similarities and contradictions between interview transcripts. Second, initial codes were created across the entire data set leading to broad overarching themes. The data was assessed and arranged into each code. Following completion, the coded data was reviewed for themes (main and sub-themes). The themes adopted were coherent and consistent across the entire data from Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains. Work to collate data into each relevant theme took place which enabled the researcher to work with and review the viability of each in the following phase. Phase four confirmed the alignment of themes across the data, this arrives through the recognition of patterns emerging. This recognition came through the reoccurrence of discussion points across the data set. To conclude analysis, the significance of themes, and the sub-themes under them, was discussed with research supervisors and meaningful names were attached to them. This confirmed the themes as meaningful and logical in relation to the research aims and objectives. The final phase of analytical



refinement was the writing of the thesis. It was within this period of writing that Bourdieu's theoretical ideas were applied to make sense of the research findings. In this process, some main themes become sub-themes and placed under wider topic areas. Sparkes and Smith (2013) alongside others (Richardson 2000) suggest writing is a further form of analysis. The ways in which we write and (re)-present research participants has been the source of contention within academic study following initial crisis of representation in 1980 (Sparkes and Smith 2013). Reflexivity, characterised by on-going self-critique, is vital in attempts to achieve rigour by making each step of the research process open and transparent and writing is a key part of this (Hand 2003).

The findings of this research are presented in the form of realist tales (Van Maanen 1988), giving high priority to the participant's voice which enables the reader to gain an important insight into experiences and opinions (Sparkes and Smith 2013). Realist tales remain the dominant way of representing qualitative findings and will continue to make a major contribution to research in sport exercise and health (Sparkes and Smith 2013). In making these decisions, this work adds to research assessing women's participation in sport (Scratton et al. 1999; Wright and Dewar 1997) and emphasises the importance of qualitative accounts, allowing elite sportswomen to express their experiences.

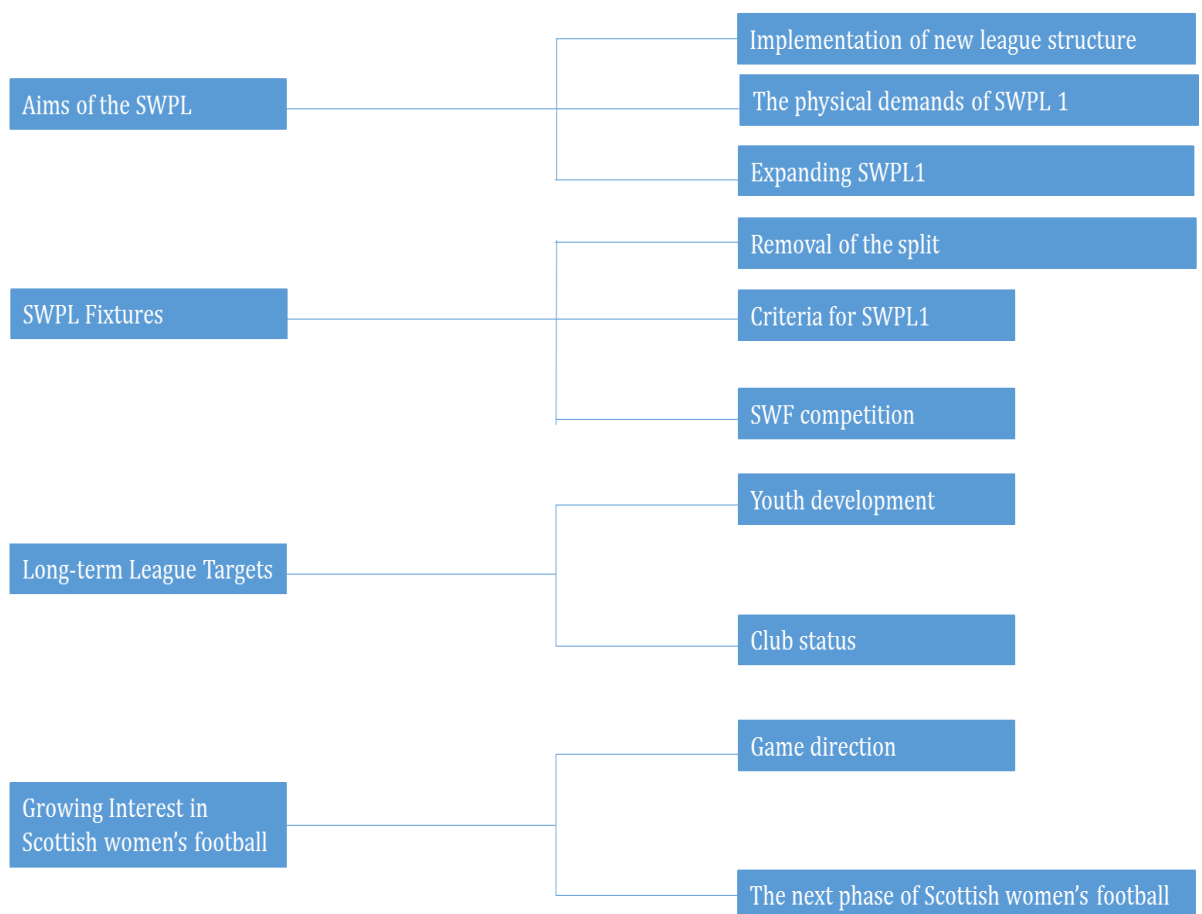
## **Reflection on Ethical Challenges**

Ethical approval was provided by the University Ethics Committee, but ethical research is an ongoing process and there were two main challenges associated with this work – anonymity of the participants and the dual researcher/coach role. Every attempt was made to maintain anonymity of all interviewee's and this was explained to them in the participant information sheet (Appendix 5). However, the anonymity becomes problematic when conducting research with members of a very specific setting or group (Flick 2009; Mellick and Fleming 2010). In this research all participants had active roles within SWPL1 for season 2016 and will likely know one another. Therefore, information gathered during the data collection phase has only been used in ways that would not identify participants. For example, discussion of data has adopted the use of gender-neutral pseudonyms such as 'Alex'. Ethical guidelines, methods textbooks and reports of qualitative sport studies all note the importance of anonymising research participants through the use of pseudonyms (Kerr and Mackenzie 2012; Podlog and Dionigi 2010; Wiles et al. 2008). However, in this case pseudonyms alone may not have been sufficient due to the small community where participants are performing in and the potential for an individual to be recognised, hence the incorporation of gender-neutral names. Reporting in this study also does not distinguish Managers, Head Coaches, Captains or Vice-Captains by role, position or team in order to protect their identity. Pseudonyms for club names have been used when an interviewee discusses team success, opposition and failure.

Another ethical challenge associated with this research was the dual role the researcher adopted through their active involvement in a SWPL1 club in addition to the research. Working within Scottish women's football enabled the researcher to generate contacts and knowledge in rich detail. The researcher and the research cannot be meaningfully separated and therefore the various roles of the researcher have been identified and acknowledged (Koch 1998). The researcher was made aware of subjectivity by the research supervisor and the potential issues related to this dual role. I have announced the research position taken within the introduction and taken careful steps to report only on participants experience and minimise personal commentary deriving from my personal experience.

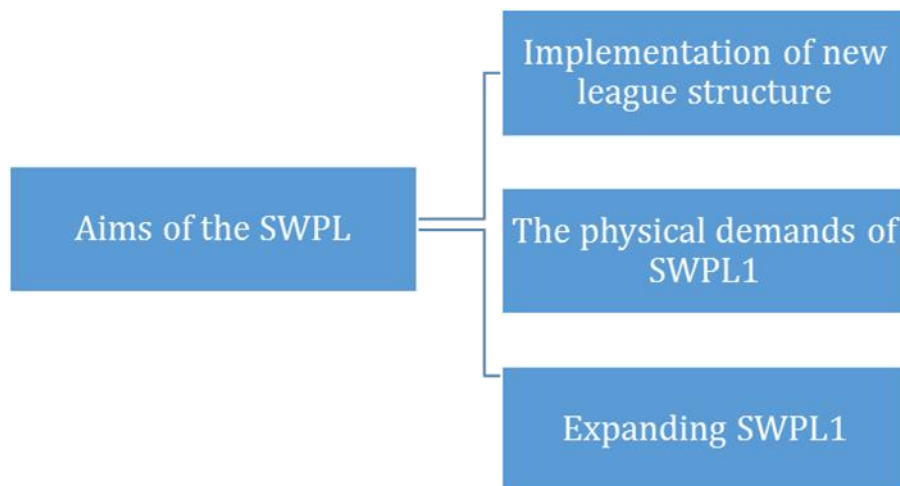
## Discussion of Findings

A thematic analysis of data has revealed four key themes within this research. These are 'Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League'; SWPL Fixtures and Criteria'; 'Long-term League Targets'; 'Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football'. Within each of these main overarching themes there are underlying categories or sub-themes (see Figure 2).



*Figure 2: Overview of Four Major Findings*

### Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League



*Figure 3: Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League*

Prior to the 2016 league restructure public and journalistic interest in the SWPL had dwindled due to the dominance of one team (Goossens 2005). Glasgow City FC had won nine consecutive titles (2007/08-2015) and extended dominance into the SWPL1 in 2016. However, the gap between this club and their competitors has been significantly cut following the restructure of the SWPL increasing the level of capital held by other clubs.

"I can't remember a time where Club A have really kind of went to the wire, nine times out of ten it has kind of been you know kind of already decided you know maybe three four weeks to go."

(Ali, Club Manager)

Competitive balance with little dominance is seldom achieved in professional men's leagues in Europe with Scotland, Serbia, Greece, and Portugal experiencing dominance from only one or two clubs over the last decade (UEFA 2017). A recent agreement of league restructure in Ireland, scheduled for 2018, incorporated an external review with Manager input required to gain inside knowledge, a level of voice similar to that of this

research. However, this did not take place in the current SWPL. The reduction method selected by the SWF and SWPL was originally discussed in December 2014 ahead of implementation for season 2015 (March-November). Managers and Head Coaches possess substantial cultural and social capital, which affords them status and position within the hierarchy of the field (Kitchin and Howe 2013), specifically Scottish women's football. The SWF and SFA maximised their levels of social capital to change the field whilst ignoring the cultural capital held by Managers and Head Coaches. A number of Managers thoughts on aims and objectives within the League of Ireland reflected those established within this research in relation to playing standards (technical ability), match day experience, game interest and marketing opportunities (FAI 2015). League changes were viewed as a tool to refresh Scottish women's football with the restructure effecting the SWPL, the Scottish women's Football League and national squads, specifically providing opportunities for greater player development.

"I think the main reason for it is to make it a more attractive place a more attractive league a more attractive one to play in and then certainly a more attractive one to market."

(Jamie, Club Manager)

A lack of consistent consultation with Managers and Head Coaches is evident through the guesswork involved in determining the aims of the SWPL restructure. A lack of justification for and clarity on the aims of the restructure left the changes open to interpretation with the perceived success of the alteration harder to manage.

“It was mentioned on a trip to Germany in December 2014 as a viewpoint to it there was then a formal email... saying that every single person in Germany was fully supportive of this... I wanted that revoked because that wasn’t the case we weren’t against it but to say in it there was this big campaign from the Scottish FA or SWF... we were really unhappy about the communications that went out to some of the low level clubs that everyone wants this, not everyone wanted it.”

(Alex, Club Manager)

In contrast, the early FAWSL promotional material in England set out a number of aims and objectives for the league and the English game in general (Dunn and Welford 2015). Initial aims and objectives detailed improvements in fan experience, competitiveness and quality of elite women’s football, increased standard of facilities and providing better opportunities to elite players (Dunn and Welford 2015). Although, the SFA aims for the restructure were never explicitly clear many participants drew upon the FAWSL aims to make sense of changes, essentially lending habitual understanding from the broader football field. Consequently, this research found Managers and players supported the suggested aims of the restructure with creation of greater competition within the SWPL.

“I think having a smaller league with the best teams in the country the 8 best teams in the country certainly adds more competition than it does with the best 12 in the country has it worked, it felt like it worked this year.”

(Jamie, Club Manager)

A more balanced competition is a more attractive one (Goosens 2005). The more attractive a championship is, the greater levels of attendance, the more broadcasters are willing to invest, the more sponsors are attracted. The higher the media profile of the league, the greater generation of economic

capital through commercial partners, although the smaller leagues that are less attractive may hold fewer commercial partners and stakeholders (Kitchin and Howe 2013).

“More competition better competition for people looking from the outside in seeing that it is a competitive league... I think that was probably their main aim of the restructure.”

(Jordan, Club Captain)

Thus, for those within the women’s football field, the game must develop to capture external support with not only association presence but through clubs and their activities. Acting imaginatively leads to attraction for player involvement, spectator interest and long-term development of cultural capital for the Scottish game, all generated through greater levels of appeal.

Although the justification for the changes remains unclear, particularly a lack of clarity on the aim of the changes, and there are ongoing annual changes, participants felt the changes to the league structure were positive in the development of Scottish women’s football.

“It has become more competitive I think that was the main objective to make it or create more of a competitive league.”

(Nic, Head Coach)

Agreement of league aims is consistent across Managers and Head Coaches and there is acceptance of minor changes during the first year of league implementation. This is similar to English experiences of league changes. The FAWSL operated for four seasons before the primary aim of increasing the competitiveness of elite women’s football was achieved (Dunn and Welford 2014). General feeling suggests league restructure is viewed



positively as it possess the top 8 clubs and will become more attractive to all.

### ***Implementation of the New League Structure***

The structure of an 8-team league has been implemented successfully in England 2011-2015 and the USA 2001-2004 (Kjaer and Agergaard 2013). Smaller divisions of this type should balance competition assuming that teams are more evenly matched than would be the case in a larger division (Dobson, Goddard and Wilson 2001). Participants identified parallels between the new Scottish league structure and the one recently adopted in England. The researcher asked Managers and Head Coaches if they were part of the group that voted for restructure and whether they held a role in the first discussion.

“What are the issues currently with the old set up? How can we overcome that? And that is where the idea of SWPL1 SWPL2 was kind of born, very similar model to what the English have obviously adopted and the Scottish league followed... that was a similar kind of pattern that they followed... I think it has been a fairly positive one.”

(Ali, Club Manager)

Notice of league change was provided through email with only a short time period for clubs to prepare, specifically those new to the division.

“I don’t think it was a plan that happened over the course of a year I think it was quite short. I remember speaking to a colleague...they had just got promoted to the premier league and I don’t think they knew... They never had enough time to plan for that jump you know. Rather than saying we need to finish 11th for our first year in the league they were having to finish 8th and they didn’t have a 6 to 12-month plan to prepare... they were probably the ones that suffered more than anyone.”

(Jamie, Club Manager)

The variance in timescale discussed by Managers and Head Coaches highlights communication challenges within this restructure. A number of Managers were present during the consultation phase with some clubs opting to have their Club Secretary and board members in attendance. Details of this restructure should have been released to all through the same message demonstrating the need for equitable capital across all clubs. This research recommends future restructures incorporating every Manager across the league for consultation and providing information on alteration within a group setting, allowing a consistent message of timescale, aims, objectives and rationale to be delivered at one time.

The players who remained within the top division empathised with teams initially targeting promotion into SWPL1 for season 2016 as the restructure prevented any promotion.

“When the restructure happened teams went down but nobody came up and I knew that was something that a lot of people didn’t really agree with. I think these are things that maybe have to happen in these types of transitions... that was probably the only negative about the restructure.”

(Jordan, Club Captain)

Assessment of the proposed League of Ireland structure suggests the relegation of teams as part of the reduction process. However, the champions of Division Two were promoted to compete within the new league structure (FAI 2015). This differs from the method adopted within Scotland but demonstrates the variance of options when considering league restructure, in particular reduction. A newly promoted team for SWPL1 in 2016 would not have the opportunity to compete against those who finished

9<sup>th</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> in 2015 (figure 4). This team would only play the top seven teams in the country, a concern that still existed ahead of the 2017 season.



*Figure 4: The implementation process of the new SWPL*

### ***The Physical Demands of SWPL1***

The findings of this study highlighted greater challenge and physical demand from all participants leading to an increase in professionalism and competitiveness, which shifts habitual practices. There has been a drive towards professionalism in Scottish women's football, with elite players now employed on a (semi)-professional basis. This has exposed players to greater training volumes and competition demands than ever before. Clubs feel they are required to take this step.

“Every weekend it is a big push also teams are getting more competitive, training more we are four nights a week last year for the first year so I do think there is major competitive advantages. I don’t even think Club A go into as many games thinking this is easy they have probably had to pay much more attention.”

(Taylor, Club Captain)

The level of economic capital for clubs with full time players is limited, but the status of holding (semi)-professional players attracts other players. Ross and Szymanski (2002) present a theoretical model that predicts that promotion and relegation increase the incentive of clubs to invest in team quality. A significant level of economic capital is not evident within Scottish women’s football, suggesting the step from SWPL 2 and SWPL1, for example, cannot be bridged through financial increases. Yet, movement away from amateur status is ongoing. Cultural and social capital is increasing through an influx of voluntary staff members and more demanding Scottish club criteria (Appendix 10). This criteria aims to change the habitual practices in Scottish women’s football and subsequently alter the organisational field to a more professional platform. The growth of professionalism has increased the cultural capital of women in Scottish football and thus altering the overall field of women’s football (Kitchin and Howe 2013).

Ahead of the 2017 season, an SWPL2 club, and those working in SWPL1, identified some players as professional. SWPL1 Managers and Head Coaches had concerns about how a team in a lower division could deliver this level of professionalism. One Club Manager, Max, asked for clarity over professional-contracts and voiced frustration as to why a club in the lower division could take this step and their club, which possess high levels of economic capital

could not. The official introduction of 'professional' contracts could see Scottish women's football achieve significant economic capital, in turn influencing habitual practices and moving towards a greater form of professionalism.

"I find it laughable that no-one from SFA has told us what constitutes a professional contract. What is a professional contract because what other clubs are doing we could never do...What is a professional contract you know so I think that is something that needs to get tidied up and needs to be cleared."

(Max, Club Manager)

Habitus produces rules and regularities that are reciprocally constructed in the field with field logic active in stating what is and is not acceptable (Kitchin and Howe 2013). Through lack of clear direction on what clubs can and cannot do with professional contracts it is evident there are problems with the habitual practices in Scottish women's football with some accepted at certain clubs and others not.

Captains and Vice-Captains were encouraged by the pressures faced in staying in the division, an element of the game previously missing as clear division within the league was evident (Appendix 1). Through their participation, agents, players adopt habitual practices and strategies that allow them to increase their understanding of the league (practical sense). This simultaneously creates field-specific dispositions (habitus) toward the game (Kitchin and Howe 2013).

“The new structure it is harder I think, it has made people try a wee bit more and I think it has made especially individually as well I think it makes people up their game that wee bit more cause you want to be there.”

(Ashton, Club Captain)

The prospect of relegation can also increase interest because more is at stake in late-season games and those involved expect that in the next season the average quality of opponents may be lower (Noll 2002), thus reducing the level of competition available to players who view themselves as top league players. The promoted team will hold a lower level of physical capital in comparison to that of the team relegated due to a lower level of exposure to games within the top division. Hence, every other team in the higher league must play at least one game with a team that was previously ranked below. Players discussed the levels of fatigue experienced at the end of season 2016 and detailed how statistics were similar across all matches, a feature new to this season’s structure through greater competitive balance.

“Physically I was more tired at the end of the season and that might be because you are going into every game probably starting your best team... It is more tiring because every single game is an effort you know we get stats and my running distance from playing against Club A to playing against Club B isn’t much different... running distance is very similar so I don’t think the season was as physically easy.”

(Taylor, Club Captain)

Increase in training time and preparation from Managers and Head Coaches arrived through realisation that high physical capital is not the only requirement to succeed in women's football. Technical, tactical, mental /

psychological characteristics play a crucial role (Andersson, Ekblom, and Krustup 2008; Krustup et al. 2005).

“With Ali (Club Manager) coming in and all the staff that he has brought in I think that has been massive and that has been a lot to do with the change in the league... There is no easy game not one week are you thinking right we can get a result here because every game is hard like you don’t go in thinking we are going to win here.”

(Rowan, Vice-Captain)

Greater emphasis on gaining a competitive advantage is evident with these increases and the methods adopted led to improved chance of success in highly competitive structures which subsequently increased capital.

### ***Expanding SWPL1***

Participation in the league allows agents to earn and accumulate social capital, which can be used as a tool to implement a variety of strategies (Kitchin and Howe 2013). The relegation of four teams was received both positively and negatively (see above), but reflecting on year one of the SWPL ‘Charlie’, recommended an extension of teams from eight to ten.

“It would have been more competitive had we had a couple of extra teams instead of it being cut straight to 8.”

(Charlie, Club Captain)

Managers and Head Coaches views on this matter differ across the division.

Those positioned near the top of the hierarchal structure, and thus increased social and cultural capital, suggest the removal of teams and the matches against bottom section teams are welcomed.

“No disrespect, but you don’t get the Club C that you are beating quite comfortably the Club D that you are beating quite comfortably you know so you don’t get those points on the board automatically.”

(Max, Club Manager)

Yet participants with teams positioned within the middle or lower regions of the league with less capital, suggested that more teams would improve the league. Those positioned near the bottom of the league perceived games against teams of a similar ability more realistic opportunities for victory, ultimately lifting them into higher rankings in the league and subsequently increasing different forms of capital. A greater level of victories albeit against lower level of opposition may provide greater club and team recognition within the field.

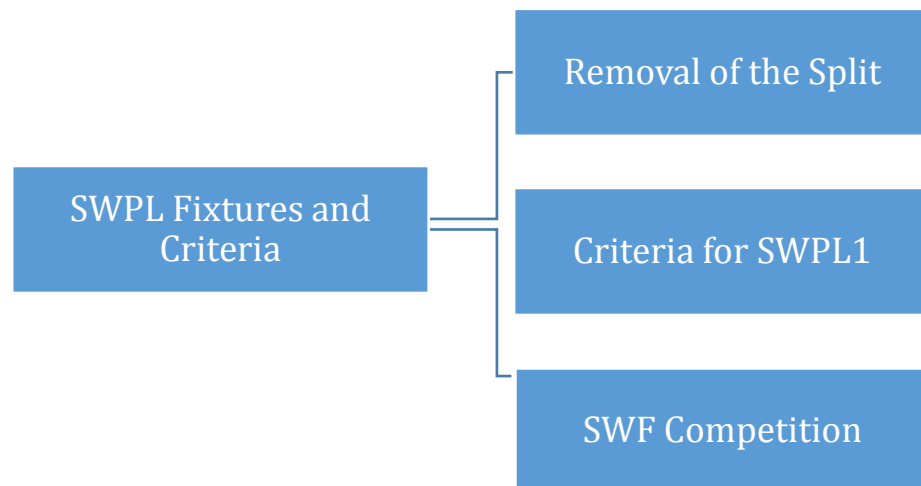
“I would say that the 12 to 8 was a bit drastic... it’s more so in the favour of the higher end teams... I might be bias but I feel like it’s kind of benefitted them more than the teams at the kind of lower and the teams that are a wee bit closer in standard that are a wee bit closer in terms of getting results from each other. I think if there was more teams it would benefit the likes of us.”

(Charlie, Club Captain).

A review of women’s football structures worldwide demonstrates that nations who adopt an eight team structure have at a later stage moved to increase the number of clubs competing within the top division through a move to nine and then ten (FAWSL 2016).



## SWPL Fixtures and Criteria



*Figure 5: Scottish Women's Premier League Fixtures and Criteria*

Participants commented on the criteria and fixture structure in the SWPL as a key source for development. Difficulty remains with the current operation of three fixtures against opponents, a schedule adopted within the SWPL as well as Slovakia, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Ireland within the men's game (Goossens and Spieksma 2012). With one home and two away fixtures (or vice versa, every second year), a club could see an impact on economic capital (e.g. cash flow) and cultural capital (e.g. spectator interest) depending on which fixtures are home and away against which clubs and the time of the season. The level of economic capital produced by each game does not correlate to the difficulties associated with a three game schedule.

"If you have got Club E away twice... Club E twice on that park and your promotion rivals or your challenger for the title only have them once away that's a leveller. It makes a difference and you know it's not come down to that one point or three points yet for a league decider but it could."

(Stevie, Head Coach)

A balanced schedule produces a final league standing reflecting the actual rank-ordering of teams by quality (Noll 2003). Regardless of the aesthetic demerits of an unbalanced schedule, it can enhance demand and levels of uncertainty attached to match outcomes due to prior records of the contesting teams are less comparable. Outcome uncertainty drives demand with unbalanced schedules increasing revenue from the round-robin schedule (Noll 2003). An unfair schedule may create selection efficiency concerns by reducing a 'better' contestant's probability of winning and therefore reducing their capital. It is therefore important for governing bodies to minimise any possible advantage that stems from an unbalanced schedule (Krumer and Lechner 2016).

"There is no reason why they can't go four games two and two and play in the summer we can play midweek as well there's no reason why you couldn't... for three or four games three or four weeks no reason whatsoever and that would then mean that for me there would be more fairness within the league."

(Ali, Club Manager)

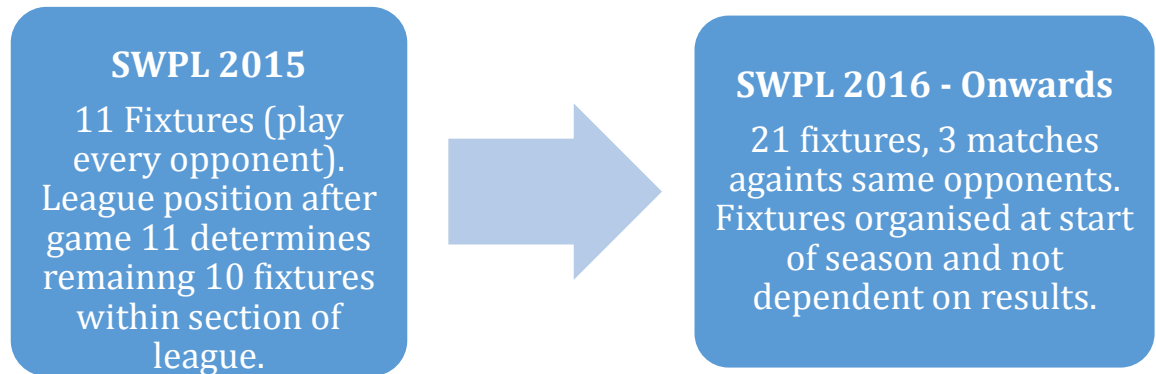
"It is repetitive I have to say that it is a bit. I mean obviously your training is geared towards a game and it is almost like you play them and then it feels like a couple of weeks later you are preparing to play that same team again especially when you take the league cup into consideration cause you are also playing the same teams."

(Taylor, Club Captain)

Balance in competition and regulations that intended to change it have been studied within an American context, but not in the context of European football (Koning 2000), limiting the ability to critically suggest alternative methods for success. Efficient schedules are therefore of major interest for

teams, players, leagues, sponsors, supporters and media (Ribeiro and Urrutia 2012).

### ***Removal of the Split***



*Figure 6: Scottish Women's Premier League Fixture Schedule pre / post restructure*

Through the reduction of top tier clubs from twelve to eight, other structures within Scottish women's football had to be removed. Pre 2015 a round robin tournament existed within the SWPL each club faced every team once before entering a specific half of the table for the remaining fixtures of the season. In the second phase of the season, teams would face opposition from only one half of the league, one game at home and away. This was an alteration of the method used within the Scottish Premier League since 2001 (BBC Sport 2001). Both players and Managers agree that the removal of the split has developed women's football in Scotland.

"The change from 12 to 8 has definitely helped I think it is better than the split. When it was a split between the top and the bottom half as much as it was good because you got competitive games for the full second half of the season I think it makes it, well it exaggerates the gap between the top teams and the lower side of the league teams in the country."

(Taylor, Club Captain)

“I never agreed with having the split I didn’t ever agree with it cause at the end of the season you have got teams that are finishing with higher points than the team that is sitting in fifth and sixth place. That is just stupid so I think not having the split this year has helped.”

(Ashley, Head Coach)

When the SWPL employed a split approach, final league standings were not representative of team quality or their cultural and social capital. Teams positioned in the bottom of the league often finished the season with more points than those positioned in the top. Competition to gain a top half finish ahead of the split was highlighted as an attraction.

### ***Criteria for SWPL1***

The criteria placed upon clubs entering SWPL1 (Appendix 10) was heavily discussed throughout this research with general agreement on the necessity and high level of standards. Criteria were shaped to improve match day experience for supporters and club(s) staff with notable improvements required for catering, stadia, coach qualifications, player pathways and media facilities. The more deeply immersed agents within a field become the greater they wish to maintain and replicate the field structures through decisions compatible to both field and club habitus (Kitchin and Howe 2013). If habitual behaviour and practice conflict with growing the professionalisation rhetoric produced by the SFA, through rejection of suggested criteria (Appendix 10), tension could arise. Examples from European women’s football suggest that even with considerable improvements, facilities are not an attraction point and does not influence the level of attendance substantially (Meier, Konjer and Leinwather 2016).

Those attached to the top three teams of 2016 understood a number of the requirements in place. However, a number of players were not aware of the criteria in place for SWPL1. Following explanation of criteria to these players a desire for criteria expansion was shown particularly in relation to the condition of pitches within stadiums used for all SWPL1 games (Appendix 10). Captains noted the quality of pitches as an issue with current criteria in place for SWPL1 suggesting the field shall be in good condition and playable throughout the playing season (Appendix 10).

Some of the pitches that we play on are embarrassing and for us to arrive as the top level of Scottish women's football and you are playing on a pitch that I wouldn't even probably put an under 17s team on is pretty embarrassing. If they want to say we are the top tier of women's football in Scotland we should be playing on pitches that would be accepted for national games every week.

(Taylor, Club Captain)

Preference of pitch standards within European women's football

(Andersson, Ekblom, and Krusturp 2008) supports the current research findings and the preferences shown by SWPL players. Female players who regularly perform on both astroturf and grass suggest it is easier to run and pass a ball when performing on artificial surface (Andersson, Ekblom, and Krusturp 2008). Feeling towards game influence varies with this research suggesting games should not be played on grass surfaces hence the call for amendments to current criteria. Managers and Head Coaches within this research agreed quality of playing surfaces should be prioritised within the criteria and felt this would significantly develop Scottish women's football.

Alongside stadium and facility criteria should be club criteria and evidenced club ambition suggests 'Alex', as an imbalance exists between social and competitive level teams within the SWPL2. This imbalance filters to girls youth development leagues leading to elite clubs moving their girls squads into boys regional leagues to achieve greater challenge.

"I think you should apply to come into it... here is our funding here is the money we are putting in here is our coaching qualifications here's the money we are going to be paying... here's how many times we are going to train... you are quite clearly going to be a national second division level that is the league you are entered in as opposed to a regional level."

(Alex, Club Manager)

Clubs with more economic capital have the ability to invest more in their facilities and stadia leading to the potential drop out of clubs with status and rich history (social capital). High levels of economic capital enables quicker progression within current criteria potentially leading to team ability being overlooked. The SFA wish to change the field but the level of economic capital provided as reward for doing so is not present, thus removing the motivation to create change as clubs suffer financially.

League structures should remain open to assisting the rise of top-level teams through further expansion to clubs within SWPL1 or the removal of fixed relegation and promotion numbers. This could be encouraged through a greater number of opportunities for promotion (SWPL2 to SWPL1) or through the greater threat of relegation (SWPL1 to SWPL2) with play-off schedules.

### ***SWF Competition***

Whilst this research primarily deals with the SWPL, the cup competitions (SWPL Cup and SSE Scottish Cup) within Scotland are important aspects of Scottish women's football. Financial reward was agreed for Scottish women's football and the SSE Scottish Cup performance for part of season 2016 and the following seasons (The SFA 2016a). An organisational field's logic determines how resources are distributed (Gammelsaeter 2010; Washington and Patterson 2011). In this case the SFA led decisions on positions within competition, which merit economic capital. The importance of this for clubs, specifically those not paired with a professional male club, cannot be underestimated. Therefore, it was unsurprising that the structure of cup competitions, particularly the amendments to existing structures, were raised by every Manager and Head Coach.

"I think a two-legged thing would be great, I think a champions league style group would be great there is more games for people... imagine Rangers having to go to Hibs on a Wednesday night in Edinburgh ... they need to get a point or they need to you know keep a two goal lead...that would be fantastic that would be great and folk would go and watch it."

(Max, Club Manager)

Group stage competition was placed within the FAWSL Continental Cup (FAWSL 2015). Removal of this structure was complete in 2016 to raise excitement and to remove the games that could not influence standings, leading to every game now having meaning (The FA 2015). In line with changes to a league cup competition, players suggested the introduction of a two-leg stage. Football frequently uses a variant of the single-elimination tournament in which two teams play a game in each home stadium with the

winner determined by aggregate score (Noll 2003). Through this method and double fixture numbers, greater revenue through gate receipts and media exposure could be achieved, an opportunity Scotland could adopt. Players also suggested changes leading to an increased number of games.

“I think definitely the league cup, it would be good cause then it is not a case of right you are beat you are out you have still got maybe another one game another two games. If it is like a round Robyn group...I think that would be quite a good idea to take forward yeah just a different change... it would probably drive more competition and maybe draw even more support.”

(Jordan, Club Captain)

The disadvantage of these types of tournaments is that elimination leads to fewer games for most teams, which sacrifices capitalising on the demand for matches that may not matter in determining a championship (Noll 2003). As the women’s season is relatively short in comparison to male counterparts, a higher volume of games were welcomed by some players across the SWPL, particularly those who have more physical capital. Players from the clubs competing in European competition and those representing national squads in particular welcomed more games within the SWPL calendar.

“I would like to play more...there is weeks where you are playing then you are not you are playing then you are not you have got three games in a row then you are off two weeks in a row and it is unsettling.”

(Rowan, Vice-Captain)

A number of breaks exist within the SWPL calendar including a four-week gap in July. The majority of research participants encouraged more fixtures and fewer breaks because the season is short. Professional men’s football in Scotland adopted a restructure of competition within the ‘Irn Bru Cup’



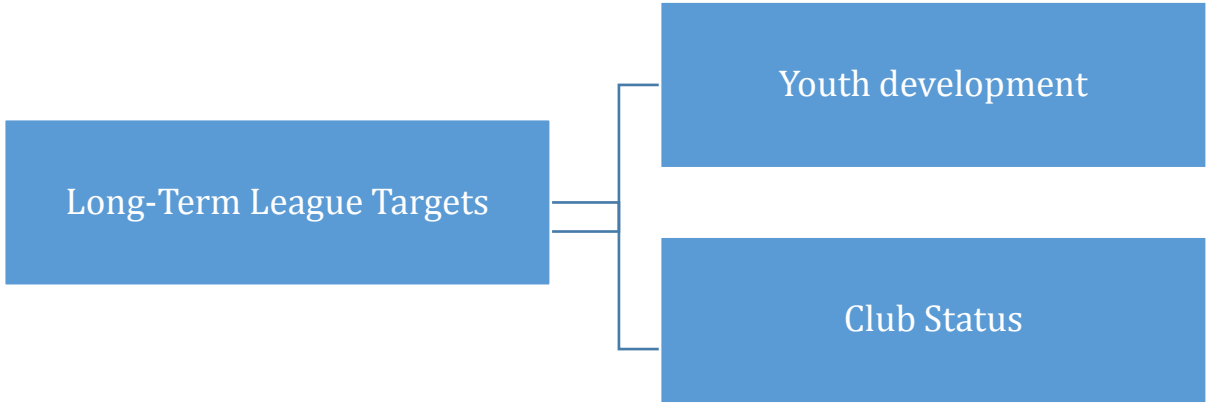
(Scottish Professional Football League 2016a) which enabled reserve / under 20 squads to enter competition against clubs positioned in leagues away from the Scottish Premier League and elsewhere in Britain (Ireland & Wales). This is a structure which could feature within Scottish women's football as an alternative to the now removed, SWPL Development League. The competition could incorporate all teams below SWPL1 in a regional group with a minimum of four additional games for teams.

"It would probably be good actually to try something like that in the league cup I know in the Irn-Bru cup or something like that they tried to restructure it."

(Jordan, Club Captain)

Based on these findings, the SFA might incorporate a double-leg fixture in the later rounds of cup competitions and introduce of a group stage within the SWPL cup.

**Long-term League Targets**



*Figure 7: Long-term League Targets (SWPL)*

Participants suggested a number of further developments to the SWPL, specifically relating to Euro 2017. All acknowledge that a successful campaign could lead to a number of new developments within Scottish women's football.

"We should already be preparing for five thousand new girls joining women's football we should be prepared to have you know an extra 200 people coming through the gate so the work should start just now. I think for the clubs for the development officers for the SFA for the SWF let's get it right."

(Ali, Club Manager)

The core of footballing success in any country comes from national team success (Williams 2003a) and with success comes an increase in public profile. Participants across both groups hoped that the Euro 2017 tournament would create a legacy of participation and interest in Scottish women's football. The SWNT success has the potential to inspire future players and develop interest of the game. Finding a club, place to play or spectate should be easy and accessible for all. This should be underway prior to the tournaments completion and not at a delayed period later.

"At the end of the day those young kids are hopefully going to be the future and be playing for the A squad so if we invest now at that age then certainly we will see the benefits of that when they get older."

(Jordan, Club Captain)

### ***Youth Development***

Elite clubs in Scotland have a number of youth internationals currently performing in development squads in Division 1 (North and South) and Division 2 (Central and East). These players are performing within lower level competition to develop. However, some could move into the top divisions of Scottish women's football. The level of status (social capital) generated through position within a top, SWPL1 and male professional clubs is highly prized and players secure benefits by virtue of memberships in social networks and social structures (Portes and Landolf 2000).

Participants, across both groups, expressed concern about the current level and amount of competition these players are exposed to. The jump from youth to senior sport is often defined as the most challenging experience in a sportspersons careers due to the demands, barriers and long-term consequences (Morris, Tod and Oliver 2015). Players suggest the current structure does not support youth player transition as much as it could and therefore expressed desire for second teams competing at the highest level possible, excluding the SWPL1 as currently players are not challenged enough.

### ***Club Status***

Due to a combination of competitive and social teams existing within SWPL2, Managers suggested changes to, or more specifically clarification on, the definitions provided on whether clubs and leagues are performance or recreationally based. This currently appears with all leagues designed as performance based. This status of teams and clubs appears throughout Scottish women's football with grassroots experiencing similar variance.

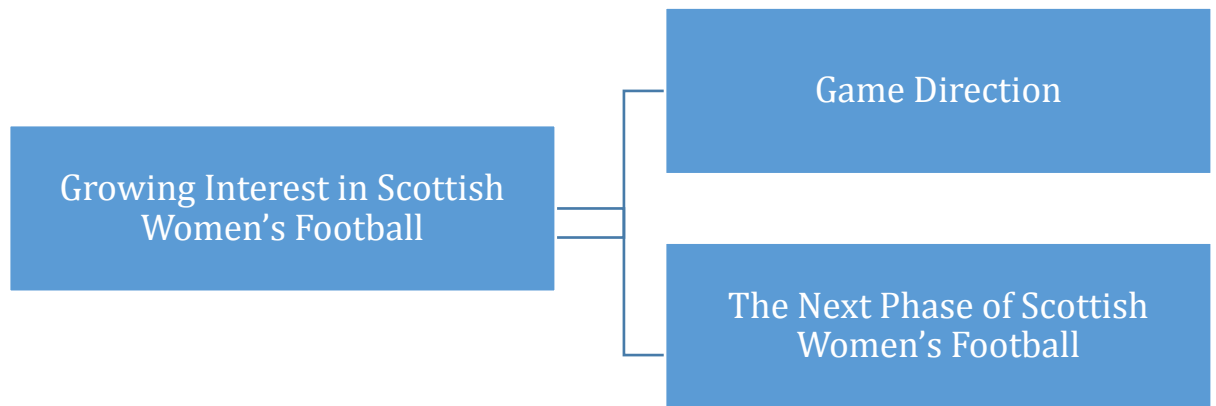
Managers and Head Coaches encourage a period prior to pre-season (November – December) where a club states their intentions of either performance based squads or recreational (including youth league teams). Discussion over the ‘social’ teams arose as Club Managers felt reserve or elite level youth squads could be placed in higher divisions of competition.

“If I was asked my absolute personal preference it would be that our reserve team can’t play in SWPL1 but can compete in all the other divisions and keep that successful... I’d like to look more closely at what they do in Spain I know that Barcelona have got their team in the lower division.”

(Jamie, Club Manager)

A number of the professional football teams that comprise the Spanish First Division also have teams that play in lower leagues (Espitia-Escuer and García-Cebrián 2004). With the removal of SWPL Development League plans in early 2017 (Scottish Women’s Football 2017) clubs are assessing options for their reserve squad players with competitive games highly desirable.

## Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football



*Figure 8: Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football*

The number of women's football spectators not only influences the levels of revenue (economic capital) attached to admission but also to the willingness of industry to select a club as an advertising partner (Czarnitzki and Stadtmann 2002). With current attendances low and top level matches averaging 300 spectators (UEFA 2016), greater attempts are required to drive interest and attract economic capital to support greater club progression. Scotland does not face a unique problem relating to income. The overall popularity of football in Denmark and other European countries are not at a stage where it transfers into an optimal valuable and sustainable commercial development (Cortsen 2016). Increased levels of marketing are encouraged by players to gain greater economic, social and cultural capital in Scottish women's football.

"The more they promote it that can only be good...there is so many businesses out there with all the money in the world but they might think we are getting or we are on money whereas we are not. So I think just promoting it just constantly cause you can't go wrong with that just putting it out there for everyone... come and watch a game and they might come and love it and say I want to be involved in this I want to put something into this."

(Rowan, Vice-Captain)

Women's football represents a niche product primarily targeting die-hard club supporters (Meier, Konjer and Leinwather 2016), but there is a need to expand the target audience and communities involved. Player status is predominantly part-time / amateur within SWPL1 and SWPL2 and many have other commitments and live outside the club's location. This affects the potential opportunities to engage in developing local identity and image required to drive a club's place within the local schools, businesses and surrounding community.

As one participant, Jamie discussed, the image of empty stadia could be viewed as a deterrent to those considering involvement in Scottish women's football.

"The cup final at Hamilton the attendance was abysmal... you look at the stand and even you know they purposely had the camera's facing the stand with the crowd but 800 people at a cup final between the two best teams in the country is just not good enough. We need to be very selective about where we play the games."

(Jamie, Club Manager)

Women's football does not generate enough economic capital for a number of players, therefore they need to engage in external employment. Within SWPL1 2016 teams attached to large men's clubs such as Hibernian FC, Celtic FC, Glasgow Rangers FC and Aberdeen FC performed with a varied level of financial input and support. The attachment to a large club may appeal to investors as they have a larger fan base. The sport and size of club

may provide the basis for determining the social capital available through engagement (Nicholson & Hoyer 2008).

### ***Game Direction***

Inter-club partnerships do not exist within the men's professional football field because of European regulation. Yet, women's football does not have these restrictions in place. Therefore, Managers expressed a desire to develop reciprocal partnerships with lower level clubs in order to feed talented players up, and also for players with decreasing physical capital to have an exit strategy. A sister club programme developed by the English Football Association has received acknowledgement from those in Scotland and is viewed as a potential project to adopt.

"I would love to build a relationship with three or four local grassroots clubs and yeah an obvious link is that we would get their best players and they would come into the programme as a pathway and also there is an exit strategy for us."

(Ali, Club Manager)

Through this partnership, sister clubs gain access to hundreds of match tickets, player appearances, coaching sessions, camps and mascot places (FAWSL 2016a). An important consideration made by Ali, is the exit strategy in place for players, as released players are encouraged to stay in the game.

What women are aiming to achieve now in women's football with great publicity, thousands of spectators, large income levels and team number's existed previously. The ban of 1921 as discussed by Williams (2003b), removed these features and disturbed the path of women's football development forever.



### ***The next phase of Scottish women's Football***

Captains and Managers both acknowledged a gap in knowledge regarding the game's direction and long-term targets. Terms are often attached to the game with targets towards 'professionalism'. However, no information or plan to arrive at this status is given, thus participants highlighted a lack of direction from the SFA.

"Where are we heading, what is it you are trying to achieve? Do you want professional players or are you heading to the junior kind of side of it, the junior game you know where it's part time players."

(Max, Club Manager)

"I don't think they know where the game is going. I don't think they have a long term plan of this is where we want to be in 20 years' time you know we want to have professional league... how can you give people information about stuff if you don't even know yourself... it just seems to me as a player as if it is ticked along the same way for years. I don't think they have you know a long term or they seem to have a long term plan."

(Frankie, Club Captain)

This pairs with the introduction of criteria (above). For example, clubs have been advised on the required levels of facility, but no club Manager involved in this research could identify when these recommendations were due for completion. Managers agreed that a clear structure of an 'SWPL1 fixture' would be welcomed in relation to correct branding placement, organisation of teams for handshakes and pre-match walkout. Currently no structure of an SWPL1 fixture is provided.

Following the re-structure of domestic football in Scotland the associations attached to the game may wish to consider how they are proceeding to professional status. The role of player contracts was central to this.

Participants highlighted how a lack of contracts created a lack of stability.

“There is no contracts I mean you sign the signing on form but as you said someone could come in tomorrow and say well that means nothing get that ripped up so that is a huge issue... very talented players for nothing pretty much so it is a huge issue it is basically a free market up here in Scotland.”

(Jordan, Club Captain)

Linked to this, Club Managers and Head-Coaches were more concerned about the availability of players within Scotland, specifically the limited number of those who can compete within SWPL1. This stems from the departure of top-level players to leagues abroad or elsewhere in the UK because of a lack of consistency on contracts across the league. Ultimately, the habitual practices associated with current player's contracts, or the lack of, needs to be addressed in order to stabilise and develop the Scottish women's football field.

## **Conclusion**

As women's football is a continuously changing field it is imperative changes are monitored, success evaluated and failures exposed (Dunn and Welford 2014). The 2016 re-structure of the SWPL highlights this continual change. Previously, there has been little research, or even broader publication, on Scottish women's football. The small collection of research is dated and following a number of structural changes within the game further research of Scottish women's football is needed. Therefore, the aim of this research was to explore how the Scottish Women's Premier League (SWPL) restructure has been viewed by SWPL1 club Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains. The underlying objectives associated to this aim were to;

- Add to knowledge on Scottish women's football, specifically capturing the experiences of those playing and working within this group.
- Provide a platform for stakeholders in Scottish women's football to voice their thoughts and desires for current and future game status.
- Produce recommendations, for structural change within Scottish women's football and women's football worldwide.

This study has succeeded in providing rich in-depth data from those rarely heard before. This has been utilised to collectively offer interpretation of

Scottish women's football and the implementation of the new SWPL.

Providing a voice for elite Scottish women's footballers, Managers and Head Coaches was achieved within this research.

Four themes were identified; 'Aims of the Scottish Women's Premier League'; 'SWPL Fixtures and Criteria'; 'Long-term League Targets'; 'Growing Interest in Scottish Women's Football'.

Changing the league structure to an eight team SWPL1 format was viewed positively by all participants. They also all agreed that the main aim, although not explicitly cited by the SFA and SWF, was to increase competition across the league and subsequently develop Scottish women's football more broadly. Preference was shown towards a league structure, which is free from a split, a method previously employed in the SWPL.

Scottish women's football as a result of the restructure is now regarded as an improved product, which opens itself to funding opportunities and greater broadcasting exposure. However, participants identified these as significant barriers currently influencing movement towards achieving professionalism within Scottish women's football. The level of attention shown towards Scottish women's football remains minimal and participants wanted stronger marketing projects to counter this. Detailed discussion provided a package of future change for the game in relation to league expansion and cup competition structures with suggestions towards league cup group structure.

Although a number of positive outcomes have been produced following the SWPL restructure, interviewees discussed a number of areas for further improvement. Justification of league change from the SFA appears scarcely with interpretation relied upon when inferring aims and objectives. The levels of communication and consultation on the restructure delivered from the SFA and SWF on aims and objectives were not particularly visible and little time was given to prepare for the changes. Communication from the SFA about the restructure was poor. Future organisations leading restructures should provide one message to all stakeholders preferably at the same time, allowing equitable opportunities to understand the changes. Club Managers also raised concerns over the elements of professional contracts within Scottish women's football and suggested a definition of what constitutes a professional contract, should be provided by the SFA. The choice to move towards professional status is an adopted direction of the game sought by all participants within this research as a result of the restructure. Currently no strategic plan or working document providing direction for Scottish women's football has been evidenced to support or disregard this potential movement.

The findings of this study have significant value for the governing bodies who influence Scottish women's football. Opinions and experiences of Club Managers, Head Coaches, Captains and Vice-Captains are invaluable in understanding how Scottish women's football can develop further. This research advises further restructures or other organisations considering restructures to hold a consultation time of two to three years to prevent any

club or Manager feeling rushed. Those involved in future restructures need to consult on changes and make the aim, rationale and purpose clear for all at one time.

### **Future Research**

This study has provided a useful insight into the experiences of Managers', Head Coaches', Captains' and Vice-Captains' experiences of this recent restructure. However, as with all research, further questions have been raised. Participants discussed the work clubs must undertake to develop themselves and the nation's game. Therefore, prospective researchers may look to assess the professionalism of the top 8 clubs in Scottish women's football through large scale opinion from those participating in that group. Furthermore, the success of the SWNT was highlighted by the interviewees throughout. Therefore, research assessing the effectiveness of the 2017 tournament and its legacy is recommended. A lack of gender balance was evident throughout this research, specifically in the Manager and Head Coach make-up of participants. Further assessment of this imbalance should be conducted through observation of the coaching and management roles held by women throughout the SWPL.

## Reference List

- Aggergaard, S. and Tiesler, N. C. 2014. Women, soccer and transnational migration. London: Routledge.
- Allan, G. and Roy, G. 2008. Does television crowd out spectators? New evidence from the Scottish Premier League. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 9(6), pp.592-605.
- Andersson, H., Ekblom, B. and Krustup, P. 2008. Elite football on artificial turf versus natural grass: movement patterns, technical standards, and player impressions. *Journal of sports sciences*, 26(2), pp.113-122.
- Applerouth, S. and Edles, L. D. 2016. Sociological theory in the contemporary era: Text and readings. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Bell, B. and Blakey, P. 2010. Do boys and girls go out to play? Women's football and social marketing at Euro 2005. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 7(3-4), pp.156-172.
- Bourdieu, P. 1984. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Harvard University Press. pp.470
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L.J. 1992. *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Chicago: University of Chicago press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1998. *Practical reason: On the theory of action*. Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 2000. The politics of protest. An interview by Kevin Ovenden. *Socialist Review*, 242, pp.18-20.
- Bourke, A. 2003. Women's football in the Republic of Ireland: Past events and future prospects. *Soccer & Society*, 4(2-3), pp.162-181.
- Bradley, P. and Postlethwaite, K. 2003. Simulation in clinical learning. *Medical Education*, 37(s1), pp.1-5.

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, 3(2), pp.77-101.
- Braun, V., Clarke, V. and Terry, G. 2014. Thematic analysis. *Qual Res Clin Health Psychol*, pp.95-114.
- BBC Sport. 2001. Guide to the SPL Split. [Online]. Available from: [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/scot\\_prem/1251646.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/football/scot_prem/1251646.stm) [Accessed 16 March 2017].
- Bromberger, C. 1995. Football as world-view and as ritual. *French Cultural Studies*, 6(18), pp.293-311.
- Brown, A. 1998. *Fanatics!: power, identity, and fandom in football*. Psychology Press.
- Brown, D. 2005. An economy of gendered practices? Learning to teach physical education from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's embodied sociology. *Sport, Education and Society*, 10(1), pp.3-23.
- Brown, D., 2006. Pierre Bourdieu's "Masculine Domination" thesis and the gendered body in sport and physical culture. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 23(2), pp.162-188.
- Cahn, S, K. 1994. From the "muscle moll" to the "butch" ballplayer: Mannishness, lesbianism, and homophobia in US women's sport. *Feminist Studies*, 19: pp. 343-368.
- Cairns, J. A. 1987. Evaluating changes in league structure: the reorganization of the Scottish Football League. *Applied Economics*, 19(2), 259-275.
- Calhoun, C. 1995. Habitus, field and capital: The question of historical specificity. In C. Calhoun, E. LiPuma. and M. Postone (Eds.), *Bourdieu: Critical perspectives*. pp. 61- 88. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cameron, E. A. 2010. *Impaled upon a Thistle: Scotland since 1880*. Vol. 10. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Campo, S.S., Vaeyens, R., Philippaerts, R.M., Redondo, J.C., de Benito, A.M. and Cuadrado, G. 2009. Effects of lower-limb plyometric training on body composition, explosive strength, and kicking speed in female soccer players. *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*, 23(6), pp.1714-1722.



- Caudwell, J. 2002. Women's experiences of sexuality within football contexts: A particular and located footballing epistemology. *Football Studies*, 5(1), pp.24-45.
- Caudwell, J. 2013. *Women's football in the UK: continuing with gender analyses*. London: Routledge.
- Caudwell, J. 2016. *Football and Misogyny*. Routledge Handbook of Football Studies. London; Routledge.
- Christensen, M. K. 2009. An eye for talent: Talent identification and practical sense of top-level soccer coaches. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 26, pp.365-382.
- Connell, R.W. and Connell, R. 2005. *Masculinities*. California: University of California Press.
- Cortsen, K. 2016. 'Re-branding' women's football by means of a new Sports product: a case study of women's football in Denmark. *Soccer and Society*, 17(1), pp.1-22
- Cox, R. W., Russell, D. and Vamplew, W. 2002. *Encyclopedia of British football*. Psychology Press. London: Routledge
- Curtis, S., Gesler, W., Smith, G. and Washburn, S. 2000. Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research: Examples in the geography of health. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(7), pp.1001-1014.
- Cushion, C. and Jones, R. L. 2006. Power, discourse, and symbolic violence in professional youth soccer: The case of Albion Football Club. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 23(2), pp. 142.
- Czarnitzki, D. and Stadtmann, G. 2002. Uncertainty of outcome versus reputation: Empirical evidence for the First German Football Division. *Empirical Economics*, 27(1), pp.101-112.
- Daly, J., Kellehear, A. and Gliksman, M. 1997. *The public health researcher: A methodological approach*. Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press.
- Davies, P. 2014. *I Lost My Heart to the Belles*. London: Penguin.
- Dobson, S., Goddard, J. and Wilson, J. O. 2001. League structure and match attendances in English rugby league. *International Review of Applied Economics*, 15(3), pp.335-351.

Donnelly, T., Donnelly, M. and Donnelly, T. 2008. Take-over and turnaround at Celtic: the McCann years 1994? 1999. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, 4(1), pp.49-61.

Dunn, C. and Welford, J. 2014. *Football and the FA Women's Super League: Structure, Governance and Impact*. Springer.

Dunn, C. and Welford, J. 2015. The Expansion of the FAWSL. In *Football and the FA Women's Super League: Structure, Governance and Impact*, pp. 32-42. Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Dunn, C. and Welford, J. 2015. The Future of the FAWSL. In *Football and the FA Women's Super League: Structure, Governance and Impact*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. pp. 79-97.

Espitia-Escuer, M. and García-Cebrián, L.I. 2004. Measuring the efficiency of Spanish first-division soccer teams. *Journal of Sports economics*, 5(4), pp.329-346.

FAWSL. 2015. FA WSL Continental Tyres Cup. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa\\_wsl\\_continental\\_tyres\\_cup.html#5XJb8ocq4B5USydY.97](http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa_wsl_continental_tyres_cup.html#5XJb8ocq4B5USydY.97) [Accessed 06 July 2017].

FAWSL. 2016. FA WSL 2016 Fixtures Announced. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa\\_wsl\\_2016\\_fixtures\\_announced.html#ChzPM16P00aMHZQi.97](http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa_wsl_2016_fixtures_announced.html#ChzPM16P00aMHZQi.97) [Accessed 14 March 2017].

FAWSL. 2016a. FA WSL Launches Sister Club Programme. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa\\_wsl\\_launches\\_sister\\_club\\_programme.html#gIsivwSabVDACRJA.97](http://www.fawsl.com/news/fa_wsl_launches_sister_club_programme.html#gIsivwSabVDACRJA.97) [Accessed 21 February 2017].

Fédération Internationale de Football Association. 2016. Women's ranking [Online]. Available from: <http://www.fifa.com/fifa-world-ranking/ranking-table/women/> [Accessed 12 September 2016].

Flick, U. 2009. *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage.

Flores, R., Forrest, D. and Tena, J.D.D. 2010. Impact on competitive balance from allowing foreign players in a sports league: Evidence from European soccer. 63(4), pp.546-557.

Football Association Ireland. 2015. *SSE Airtricity League Consultation Process 2015 Report*. [Online]. Available from:

[http://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/SSE%20AL%20Consultation%20Process%20-%20FINAL%20REPORT%20-%202014%20Sep%202015%20\(2\)\\_0.pdf](http://www.fai.ie/sites/default/files/atoms/files/SSE%20AL%20Consultation%20Process%20-%20FINAL%20REPORT%20-%202014%20Sep%202015%20(2)_0.pdf) [Accessed 17 February 2017].

Fylan, F. 2005. Semi-structured interviewing. A handbook of research methods for clinical and health psychology, pp.65-78.

Galletta, A. 2013. Mastering the semi-structured interview and beyond: From research design to analysis and publication. NYU Press.

Gammelsæter, H. 2010. Institutional pluralism and governance in “commercialized” sport clubs. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 10(5), pp.569-594.

Gilenstam, K., Karp, S. and Henriksson-Larsén, K. 2008. Gender in ice hockey: women in a male territory. *Scandinavian journal of medicine & science in sports*, 18(2), pp.235-249.

Giulianotti, R. 2003. Celtic, the UEFA Cup Final, and the Condition of Scottish Club Football: Notes and Recommendations from Seville, Spain. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 27(3), pp.207-214.

Giulianotti, R. 1999. *Football: a sociology of the global game*. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press

Goossens, K. 2005. Competitive balance in European football: Comparison by adapting measures: National measure of seasonal imbalance and top 3. University of Antwerp, Research Administration.

Goossens, D.R. and Spieksma, F.C. 2012. Soccer schedules in Europe: an overview. *Journal of scheduling*, pp.1-11.

Hall, G., Shearer, D., Thomson, R., Roderique-Davies, G., Mayer, P. and Hall, R. 2012. Conceptualising commitment: a thematic analysis of fans of Welsh rugby. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, 4(1), pp.138-153.

Hand, H. 2003. The mentor’s tale: a reflexive account of semi-structured interviews. *Nurse Researcher*, 10(3), pp.15-27.

Harris, J. 2002 'No you can't play you're a girl: Some primary school recollections of female football players', *The Bulletin of Physical Education*, Vol. 38, No. 3, pp.161-178.

- Hjelm, J. and Olofsson, E. 2003. A breakthrough: Women's football in Sweden. *Soccer and Society*, 4(2-3): pp. 182-204.
- Hoffmann, R., Chew Ging, L., Matheson, V. and Ramasamy, B. 2006. International women's football and gender inequality. *Applied Economics Letters*, 13(15), pp. 999-1001.
- Holden, P. and Wilde, N. 2004. Defense or attack? Can soccer clubs help tackle social exclusion?.
- Hong, F. and Mangan, J. 2004. *Soccer, Women, Sexual Liberation: Kicking Off a New Era*, London: Frank Cass
- Horton, J., Macve, R. and Struyven, G. 2004. Qualitative research: experiences in using semi-structured interviews. *The real life guide to accounting research*, pp.339-357.
- Houlihan, B. and Malcolm, D. eds. 2015. *Sport and society: a student introduction*. London: Sage.
- Jennett, N. 1984. Attendances, uncertainty of outcome and policy in Scottish league football. *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, 31(2), pp.176-198.
- Johnes, M. and Mason, R. 2003. Soccer, public history and the National Football Museum. *Sport in History*, 23(1), pp.115-131.
- Kay, J. and Laberge, S. 2002. Mapping the field of "AR": Adventure racing and Bourdieu's concept of field. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 19(1), pp.25-46.
- Kay, J. and Laberge, S. 2002a. The New 'Corporate Habitus in Adventure Racing. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 37(1), pp.17-36.
- Kelly, S. 2008. Understanding the role of the football manager in Britain and Ireland: A Weberian approach. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 8(4), pp.399-419.
- Kerr, J.H. and Mackenzie, S.H. 2012. Multiple motives for participating in adventure sports. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 13(5), pp.649-657.
- King, A. 2002. *End of the terraces: The transformation of English football*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- King, N. and Horrocks, C. 2010. Interviews in qualitative research. London: Sage.
- Kitchin, P.J. and Howe, P.D. 2013. How can the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu assist sport management research?. *Sport management review*, 16(2), pp.123-134.
- Kjær, J. B. and Agergaard, S. 2013. Understanding women's professional soccer: the case of Denmark and Sweden. *Soccer & Society*. 14(6): pp. 816-833.
- Knoch, H. 2002. Community on time. Football and the transformation of the National in Germany and England. In *football worlds*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften. pp. 117-153.
- Koch, T. 1998. Story telling: is it really research?. *Journal of advanced nursing*, 28(6), pp.1182-1190.
- Koning, R.H. 2000. Balance in competition in Dutch soccer. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series D (The Statistician)*, 49(3), pp.419-431.
- Krumer, A. and Lechner, M. 2016. Midweek Effect on Performance: Evidence from the German Soccer Bundesliga (No. 1609). University of St. Gallen, School of Economics and Political Science.
- Krustrup, P., Mohr, M., Ellingsgaard, H.E. and Bangsbo, J. 2005. Physical demands during an elite female soccer game: importance of training status. *Medicine and science in sports and exercise*, 37(7), pp.1242.
- Leeds, M. and Leeds, E.M. eds., 2013. *Handbook on the Economics of Women in Sports*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. 2010. *Practical research: Planning and design* (9th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Light, R. and Kirk, D. 2000. High school rugby, the body and the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. *Sport, education and society*, 5(2), pp.163-176.
- Lingard, B. and Christie, P. 2003. Leading theory: Bourdieu and the field of educational leadership. An introduction and overview to this special issue. *Int. J. Leadership in education*, 6(4), pp.317-333.

Lock, D., Darcy, S. and Taylor, T. 2009. Starting with a clean slate: An analysis of member identification with a new sports team. *Sport Management Review*, 12(1), pp.15-25.

Low, J. 2012. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews in health research. *Researching health: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods*, p.87.

Luborsky, M.R. and Lysack, C. 2017. Design Considerations in Qualitative Research. *Kielhofner's Research in Occupational Therapy: Methods of Inquiry for Enhancing Practice*, pp.180.

Lysack, C. and Luborsky, M.R. 2006. Overview of qualitative research. *Research in occupational therapy: Methods of inquiry for enhancing practice*, pp.326-340.

Macbeth, J. 2002. The development of women's football in Scotland. *Sport Historian*. 22(2), pp.149-163.

Macbeth, J. 2004. Women's football in Scotland: An Interpretive analysis.

Macbeth, J. 2005. The "Pals", the "Professionals" and the "Conformers": The Meaning of Football in the Lives of Women Footballers in Scotland. *The Beautiful Game? Football Identities and Finances*. pp. 79-98.

Macbeth, J. 2007. Women's football in Scotland: An historical overview. *Women, Football and Europe: Histories, Equity and Experiences*, pp.3-26.

Macbeth, J. 2008. Attitudes Towards Women's Football in Scottish Society. *Scottish Affairs*. 63(1): pp. 89-119.

Magee, J., Caudwell, J. and Liston, K. 2008. Women, football and Europe: histories, equity and experience. Vol. 1. Meyer & Meyer Verlag.

McCormack, C. and Walseth, K. 2013. Combining elite women's soccer and education: Norway and the NCAA. *Soccer & Society*, 14(6), pp.887-897.

McCuaig, M. 2000. "A Brief History of Women's Football" (at [http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/museum/vomen\\_index.litm](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/museum/vomen_index.litm)) Cited in Macbeth, J. 2004. Women's football in Scotland: An Interpretive analysis.

McDowell, M.L. 2013. *A Cultural History of Association Football in Scotland, 1865-1902: Understanding Sports as a Way of Understanding Society*. Edwin Mellen Press.

McMenemy, D., Poulter, A. and O'Loan, S. 2005. A robust methodology for investigating Old Firm related sectarianism online. *International Journal of Web Based Communities*, 1(4), pp.488-503.

Meier, H.E., Konjer, M. and Leinwather, M. 2016. The demand for women's league soccer in Germany. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 16(1), pp.1-19.

Melee, L. and Lord, R. (In review). How might Scotland develop women's football? An exploration of coaches' and managers' views. *Soccer & society*

Mellick, M. and Fleming, S. 2010. Personal narrative and the ethics of disclosure: A case study from elite sport. *Qualitative research*, 10(3), pp.299-314.

Melling, A. 1999. 'Plucky lasses', 'pea soup' and politics: the role of ladies' football during the 1921 miners' lock-out in Wigan and Leigh. *The International journal of the history of sport*, 16(1), pp. 38-64.

Morris, R., Tod, D. and Oliver, E. 2015. An analysis of organizational structure and transition outcomes in the youth-to-senior professional soccer transition. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 27(2), pp.216-234.

Morrow, S. 2003. *The people's game?: football, finance and society*. Springer.

Morrow, S. 2013. Structure and change in professional football: an Old Firm's search for a new market. *Soccer & Society*, 14(4), pp.462-484.

Nicholson, M. and Hoye, R. eds. 2008. *Sport and social capital*. London: Routledge.

Nilstad, A., Andersen, T.E., Bahr, R., Holme, I. and Steffen, K. 2014. Risk factors for lower extremity injuries in elite female soccer players. *The American journal of sports medicine*, 42(4), pp.940-948.

Noble, G. and Watkins, M. 2003. So, how did Bourdieu learn to play tennis? Habitus, consciousness and habituation. *Cultural studies*, 17(3-4), pp.520-539.

- Noll, R.G. 2002. The economics of promotion and relegation in sports leagues: The case of English football. *Journal of Sports Economics*, 3(2), pp.169-203.
- Noll, R.G. 2003. The organization of sports leagues. *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 19(4), pp.530-551.
- Orb, A., Eisenhauer, L. and Wynaden, D. 2001. Ethics in qualitative research. *Journal of nursing scholarship*, 33(1), pp.93-96.
- Palinkas, L.A., Horwitz, S.M., Green, C.A., Wisdom, J.P., Duan, N. and Hoagwood, K. 2015. Purposeful sampling for qualitative data collection and analysis in mixed method implementation research. *Administration and Policy in Mental Health and Mental Health Services Research*, 42(5), pp.533-544.
- Park, R. J. 1994. From 'Genteel Diversions' to 'Bruising Peg': Active Pastimes, Exercise, and Sports for Females in Late 17th-and 18th-Century Europe. *Women and Sport. Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. Champaign (USA), Human Kinetics.
- Patton, M.Q. 1990. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods*. SAGE Publications, inc.
- Patton, M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Peachey, J.W., Cohen, A., Borland, J. and Lyras, A. 2011. Building social capital: Examining the impact of Street Soccer USA on its volunteers. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*.
- Pfister, G., Fasting, K., Scraton, S. and Benilde, V., 2002. Women and football-a contradiction? The beginnings of women's football in four European countries'. *Gender and sport: A reader*, pp.66.
- Pfister, G. 2003. The challenges of women's football in east and west Germany: A comparative study. *Soccer & Society*, 4(2-3), pp.128-148.
- Pfister, G., Klein, M and Tiesler, N. 2014. "Momentous Spark or Enduring Enthusiasm? The 2011 FIFA Women's World Cup and Its Impact on Players' Mobility and on the Popularity of Women's Soccer in Germany." In *Women, Soccer and Transnational Migration*, edited by S. Agergaard and N. C. Tiesler, pp.140-158. London: Routledge



Podlog, L. and Dionigi, R. 2010. Coach strategies for addressing psychosocial challenges during the return to sport from injury. *Journal of sports sciences*, 28(11), pp.1197-1208.

Portes, A. and Landolt, P. 2000. Social capital: promise and pitfalls of its role in development. *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 32(02), pp.529-547.

Ravel, B. and Gareau, M. 2016. 'French football needs more women like Adriana'? Examining the media coverage of France's women's national football team for the 2011 World Cup and the 2012 Olympic Games. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 51(7), pp.833-847.

Renold, E. 1997 'All they've got on their brains is football: Sport, masculinity and the gendered practices of playground relations', *Sport, Education and Society*, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp.5-23.

Ribeiro, C.C. and Urrutia, S. 2012. Scheduling the Brazilian soccer tournament: Solution approach and practice. *Interfaces*, 42(3), pp.260-272.

Ricciardelli, L.A., McCabe, M.P. and Ridge, D. 2006. The construction of the adolescent male body through sport. *Journal of health psychology*, 11(4), pp.577-587.

Richardson, L. 2000. Writing: A method of inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & YS Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*, pp. 923-948.

Ritzer, G. 1996. *Sociological theory*. Singapore: McGraw Hill.

Ross, S.F. and Szymanski, S. 2002. Open competition in league sports. *Wis. L. Rev.*, p.625.

Schell, L. A. and Rodriguez, S. 2000. Our sporting sisters: How male hegemony stratifies women in sport. *Women in Sport & Physical Activity Journal*, 9(1), pp.15.

Scot Women's Football. 2017. [Online]. Available from: <http://scotwomensfootball.com/fixtures-and-results/> [Accessed 08 June 2017].

Scottish Professional Football League. 2016. Available from: <http://spfl.co.uk/premiership/archive/> [Accessed 06 September 2016].

- Scottish Professional Football League. 2016a. [Online].  
<http://spfl.co.uk/news/article/irn-bru-adds-fizz-to-challenge-cup/>  
 [Accessed 09 march 2017].
- Scottish Women's Football. 2017. [Online].  
<http://scotwomensfootball.com/swf-statement-development-league-13012017/> [Accessed 22 February 2017].
- Scruton, S., Fasting, K., Pfister, G. and Bunuel, A. 1999. It's still a man's game? The experiences of top-level European women footballers. *International review for the sociology of sport*, 34(2), pp.99-111.
- Scruton, S. and Flintoff, A. 2002. *Gender and sport: A reader*. Psychology Press.
- Shilling, C. 1997. *The body and social theory*. London: Sage
- Siisiainen, M. 2003. Two concepts of social capital: Bourdieu vs. Putnam. *International Journal of Contemporary Sociology*, 40(2), pp.183-204.
- Silvers, H. J. and Mandelbaum, B. R. 2007. Prevention of anterior cruciate ligament injury in the female athlete. *British journal of sports medicine*, 41, pp.52-59.
- Sinden, K., MacDermid, J., Buckman, S., Davis, B., Matthews, T. and Viola, C. 2013. A qualitative study on the experiences of female firefighters. *Work*, 45(1), pp.97-105.
- Sparkes, A.C. and Smith, B. 2013. *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. London: Routledge.
- Suri, H. 2011. Purposeful sampling in qualitative research synthesis. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 11(2), pp.63-75.
- Swartz, D. 2012. *Culture and power: The sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. University of Chicago Press.
- Tacon, R. 2007. Football and social inclusion: Evaluating social policy. *Managing Leisure*, 12(1), pp.1-23.
- Taylor, M. 2013. *The association game: a history of British football*. London: Routledge.

- The Football Association. 2015. New knock-out Format For The FA WSL Continental tyres Cup.[Online]. Available from: <http://www.thefa.com/news/2015/Dec/10/wsl-continental-cup-to-take-knockout-format-101215> [Accessed 20 February 2017].
- The Scottish Football Association. 2016. Calling All Marketers - Exciting Vacancy at Scottish Women's Football. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish\\_fa\\_news.cfm?page=1986&newsCategoryID=26&newsID=15887](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish_fa_news.cfm?page=1986&newsCategoryID=26&newsID=15887) [Accessed 20 April 2017].
- The Scottish Football Association. 2016a. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish\\_fa\\_news.cfm?page=2986&newsID=16500&newsCategoryID=1](http://www.scottishfa.co.uk/scottish_fa_news.cfm?page=2986&newsID=16500&newsCategoryID=1) [Accessed 09 March 2016].
- Tomlinson, A. 2004. Pierre Bourdieu and the sociological study of sport: Habitus, capital and field. *Sport and modern social theorists*, pp.161-172.
- Tomlinson, A. and Young, C. (Eds.). 2006. *German football: history, culture, society*. London: Routledge.
- Trolan, E. J. 2013. The impact of the media on gender inequality within sport. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 91, pp.215-227.
- Union of European Football Associations. 2016. Women's football across the national associations 2016/17. [Online]. Available from: [http://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/OfficialDocument/uefaorg/Women'sfootball/02/43/13/56/2431356\\_DOWNLOAD.pdf](http://www.uefa.com/MultimediaFiles/Download/OfficialDocument/uefaorg/Women'sfootball/02/43/13/56/2431356_DOWNLOAD.pdf) [Accessed 21 February 2017].
- Union of European Football Associations. 2017. History – Seasons 2006/07 2007/08 2008/09 2009/10 2010/11 2011/12 2012/2013 2013/2014 2014/15 2015/16. [Online]. Available from: <http://www.uefa.com/uefachampionsleague/history/index.html#> [Accessed 20 March 2017].
- Vamplew, W. 2004. *Pay up and play the game: Professional sport in Britain, 1875-1914*. Cambridge University Press.
- Van Maanen, J. 1988. *Realist tales. Tales of the Field*, 1.
- Wagg, S. 2004. *British football & social exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Walvin, J. 1975. *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football*. London: Allen Lane.

- Warde, A. 2006. Cultural capital and the place of sport. *Cultural Trends*, 15(2-3), pp.107-122.
- Washington, M. and Patterson, K.D. 2011. Hostile takeover or joint venture: Connections between institutional theory and sport management research. *Sport Management Review*, 14(1), pp.1-12.
- Wiles, R., Crow, G., Heath, S. and Charles, V. 2008. The management of confidentiality and anonymity in social research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(5), pp.417-428.
- Williams, J. 2003. *A Game for Rough Girls?: A History of Women's Football in England*. London: Routledge.
- Williams, J. 2003a. The fastest growing sport? Women's football in England. *Soccer & Society*, 4(2-3), pp.112-127.
- Williams, J. 2013. *Globalising Women's Football: Europe, Migration and Professionalisation*. Peter Lang.
- Williams, J. 2013a. *A Game for Rough Girls?: A History of Women's Football in Britain*. London: Routledge.
- Williamson, D. J. 1991. *Belles of the ball: [the early history of women football]*. R&D Associates.
- Woodward, K. 2017. Women's time? Time and temporality in women's football. *Sport in Society*, 20(5-6), pp.689-700.
- Wright, J. and Dewar, A. 1997. On pleasure and pain: women speak out about physical activity. In *Researching women and sport*. Palgrave Macmillan UK. pp. 80-95.
- Zevenbergen, R., Edwards, A. and Skinner, J. 2002. Junior golf club culture: a Bourdieuan analysis. *Sociology of Sport Online-SOSOL*, 5(1), pp.1-11.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Final Scottish Women's Premier League Table 2015

Position	Club	Played	W	D	L	GF	GA	GD	Points
<b>Top 6</b>									
<b>1 (C)</b>	<b>Glasgow City</b>	21	19	2	0	99	11	88	59
<b>2</b>	<b>Hibernian</b>	21	17	2	2	72	20	52	53
<b>3</b>	<b>Celtic</b>	21	11	2	8	54	28	26	35
<b>4</b>	<b>Aberdeen</b>	21	10	4	7	32	24	8	34
<b>5</b>	<b>Spartans</b>	21	8	1	12	44	38	6	25
<b>6</b>	<b>Rangers</b>	21	8	0	13	30	57	-27	24
<b>Bottom 6 (Decided after 11 games)</b>									
<b>7</b>	<b>Stirling University</b>	21	11	3	7	45	31	14	36
<b>8</b>	<b>Forfar Farmington</b>	21	11	1	9	45	40	5	34
<b>9 (R)</b>	<b>Hearts</b>	21	6	4	11	27	52	-25	22
<b>10 (R)</b>	<b>Hamilton Accies</b>	21	7	1	13	24	62	-38	22

<b>11 (R)</b>	<b>Hutchison Vale</b>	21	5	3	13	31	65	-34	18
<b>12 (R)</b>	<b>Inverness City</b>	21	0	3	18	14	89	-75	3

## Appendix 2: Participant Breakdown

<b>Role in SWPL 1</b>	<b>Experience in SWF (Years)</b>
Manager	10
Manager	10
Manager	11
Manager	10+
Manager	10
Head Coach	5+
Head Coach	5+
Head Coach	10+
Captain	5+
Captain	10
Captain	10
Captain	5+
Captain	15+
Vice- Captain	10

### **Appendix 3: Receipt of Ethics Acceptance**

Project Reference Number: SHS\_T\_2015-16\_897

Project Title: **A review of the Scottish Women's Premier League season 2016 following league restructure; Club Manager's/ Head Coach and Captain / Vice-Captain's views.**

Proposer: Lewis Melee

Matriculation number: [REDACTED]

Programme:, Stage

Supervisor: Rhiannon Lord

The above Project has been granted Full ethical approval.

Additional Conditions:

NB: you are not required to resubmit your application if you have been given

Additional Conditions.

Standard Conditions:

These apply to all Research Ethics applications

- i The Proposer must remain in regular contact with the project supervisor.
- ii The Supervisor must see a copy of all materials and procedures prior to commencing data collection.
- iii If any substantive changes to the proposed project are made, a new ethical approval application must be submitted to the Committee.

Completed forms should be resubmitted through the Research Ethics Blackboard course.

iv Any changes to the agreed procedures must be negotiated with the project supervisor.

Failure to comply with these conditions will result in ethical approval being revoked by the Ethics Committee.

Research Ethics Committee

19.09.16

#### **Appendix 4: Participant Email**

Hi

Through your role in the top level of Scottish Women's football, in particular Scottish Premier League 1 (SWPL 1) you have met criteria in place for a research study that I am looking to carry out as part of my university master's degree at Abertay University, Dundee. The study which is interview based will review the 2016 Scottish Women's Premier League 1 season following league restructure. I am looking to evaluate the first SWPL 1 season and forward recommendations to the governing body for future developments.

Your participation in this study would involve an interview lasting around 1 hour discussing various topics associated with women's football in Scotland. The interview would be conducted by the researcher at a mutually agreed venue and time.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please let me know by replying to this email. More information is available from the participant information sheet (attached).

If you have any other questions regarding this study please do not hesitate to get in touch with me through email.

Kind regards,  
Lewis Melee



(Abertay University)

## Appendix 5: Participant Information Sheet



### Participant Information Sheet

**Research Title:** A review of the Scottish Women's Premier League season 2016 following league restructure; Club Manager's / Head Coach and Captain / Vice-Captains views.

**Research Aim:** Explore how the restructure of the Scottish Women's Premier League has been viewed through the use of interviews with current Scottish Women's Premier League 1 Club Manager's / Head Coach and Captain / Vice-Captains.

### **PART 1**

#### **1. Invitation**

As a participant you have been selected to take part in an interview process to discuss how the restructure of the Scottish Women's Premier League. As an interviewee you have met certain criterion which requires you to have held the position of Club Manager / Head Coach and Captain / Vice-Captain within the Scottish Women's Premier League 1 in season 2016.

#### **2. What is the purpose of the study?**

The purpose of this study is to explore how the restructure of the Scottish Women's Premier League has been viewed through the use of interviews with current Scottish Women's Premier League 1 Club Manager's / Head Coaches and Captains / Vice-Captains.

#### **3. Do I have to take part?**

No, participation in this research project is voluntary and therefore it is not mandatory to take part. You will be provided with a voluntary informed consent form before beginning the interview and if you agree to participate you hold the right to withdraw at any stage of the process without having to state a reason.

**4. What will happen to me if I take part?**

If you agree to take part in this study you will participate in a semi-structured interview with the researcher in an agreed location. The data from this interview will then be transcribed through the use of thematic analysis to discover themes related to the research question. The data will be kept securely on computer application with a passcode required before access.

**5. What are the possible risks of taking part?**

A full risk assessment has been carried out and approved by the Ethics Committee at Abertay University. Steps have been taken to ensure confidentiality of interviewees is maintained to prevent any possible identity being identified.

**6. What happens when the research study stops?**

Following completion of this research study you will have the option to receive a copy of the final results. The data and personal details that will be produced from the interviewees will be stored securely and then disposed of through shredding.

**7. What if there is a problem?**

You have the opportunity to raise and discuss problems if any arise.

**This completes Part 1 of the Information Sheet. If the information in Part 1 has interested you and you are considering participation, please continue to read the additional information in Part 2 before making any decision.**

**PART 2**

**8. What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?**

Participation in this study is voluntary and therefore you hold the right to withdraw at any stage in this study.

**9. Will my part in this study be kept confidential?**

Involvement in this study will be kept strictly confidential, procedures have been put in place to protect your identity so that you remain anonymous. Interviewee's names will not be used in the final report; gender neutral pseudonyms will be used instead.

**10. What will happen to the results of this study?**

At the end of this study results will be presented to Abertay University for assessment, it is also the intention of the researcher to present this work to the Scottish Football Association to pass on suggestions as to how to develop the game.

**11. Who is organizing and funding this study?**

As this study is being led by Abertay University there is no funding linked to the study.

**12. Contact for further information**

I encourage you to ask questions regarding the research project, it is essential that understanding is held. Below are the contact details for the researcher and the university representative managing this research project.

Lewis Melee, Lead Researcher- [REDACTED]@abertay.ac.uk

Dr Rhiannon Lord, University Supervisor- [REDACTED]@abertay.ac.uk

**This project has been reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Social and Health Science**

## **Appendix 6: Voluntary Informed Consent**

### Participant Informed Consent Form

**Research Title:** A review of the Scottish Women's Premier League season 2016 following league restructure; Club Manager's / Head Coach and Captain / Vice-Captains views.

The purpose and expected process of this study have been explained to me. I understand that this study is designed to further scientific knowledge and that Abertay University has approved all procedures.

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet provided.
- I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions about my participation and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can stop taking part at any time without giving reason.
- I also understand that if this happens, my relationship(s) with Abertay University, and my legal rights will not be affected.
- I understand that my information will be used for reporting purposes but I will not be identified.
- I understand that my information will be kept securely for a period of 5 years because you are required to do so by the university.
- I agree to Participate in this study.

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Person taking consent: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 7: Email to SWPL Club**

Dear

Through the club's position in the top level of Scottish Women's football, in particular Scottish Premier League 1 (SWPL 1) 2016 the club captain and vice-captain have met criteria in place for a master's research study I am looking to carry out as part of my degree at Abertay University, Dundee. The study which is interview based will review the 2016 Scottish Women's Premier League 1 season following league restructure. I am looking to evaluate the first SWPL 1 season and forward recommendations to the governing body for future developments.

I am looking to recruit your club captain and vice-captain for this study with their participation involving an interview lasting around 1 hour discussing various topics associated with women's football in Scotland. The interview would be conducted by the researcher at a mutually agreed venue and time.

As Club Manager could I please have your permission to approach these players to ask if they would like to participate in the study. If you are happy for your players to participate in this study, please let me know by replying to this email. I will use the contact details provided by the club to discuss the study with them should they wish to participate. More information is available from the participant information sheet (attached).

If you have any other questions regarding this study, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me through email.

Kind regards,

Lewis Melee

(Abertay University)

## **Appendix 8: Interview Schedule Club Manager / Head Coach**



### **Introduction**

- Introduction to dictaphone, confirm the participant has seen all forms and are happy to begin interview.

### **Participant Introduction**

- Tell me a little bit about your football career and your coaching positions?
- What's involved in your role daily?

### **SWPL Restructure**

- Can you summarise in the key elements of the SWPL restructure for 2016 and what this meant for SWF?
- What do you believe the main aim of the restructure was?
- As a club how did you receive information on the restructure, criteria involved?
- What were your initial thoughts on the restructure following communication?
- Do you believe restructure was needed?
- Do you believe the move to an eight team league was correct?
- Were there any individual club issues caused because of the restructure?
- Criteria involved in the game, clubs managed this well?
- New development leagues?
- Are you aware of a better structure employed abroad? We see America and England adopt and then change the 8 team league, will we expand again?

### **The SWPL and Cup Season Review**

- What do you view as the strength and weakness of the new SWPL restructure?
- What implications has the new structure had for you and the club/ your players, any notable changes from seasons previous?

- Having now experienced one season of the new structure, was this a positive change? Firstly, on a club basis and generally for the game?
- Attendances and coverage, have you noted a greater increase?
- Previous concerns attached to the game addressed? Have more developed, demand for players, too many teams?
- This year we have witnessed issues regarding player registration, this should not be happening in the top level of football, do the SWF need to give more guidance on this and other points?

### **The Cup Competitions**

- Cup competitions- A new winner. What does this do for game
- Draws conducted online, does this develop the professional side of the game. Should we be doing more to sell game?
- Cup competitions hold a large importance within the WSL season, do you think Scotland should alter its set up of cup competitions? Champions league style or group stage

### **European Football and Euro 2017**

- Anything you have learnt from Champions league experience we could use in this country, specifically Bayern or completion set up?
- The support from the men's side of the game is great to see, how did that come about and how do others follow your model?
- The SWNT have reached euro 2017, firstly your thoughts on that and the effect that can have on this country?
- The changes in recent years within this country, have they helped this country reach tournament or has this come through players leaving the league?
- Is this country ready for a large surge in players and interest in the women's game?

### **Future Steps**

- What, if any, additional changes would you make to the structure of Scottish women's football?

### **Conclusion**

- Another topic within Scottish women's football you would like researched?
- Thank you for your time, it is greatly appreciated.

## **Appendix 9: Interview Schedule Club Captain / Vice-Captain**



### **Introduction**

- Introduction to dictaphone, confirm the participant has seen all forms and are happy to begin interview.

### **Participant Introduction**

- Tell me a little bit about your football career and your position within your club?

### **SWPL Restructure**

- Can you summarise the key elements of the SWPL restructure for 2016?
- What do you believe the main aim of the restructure was? Met in your eyes?
- As a captain / Vice-Captain how did you receive information on the restructure?
- What were your initial feelings on the restructure, if you think back?
- Did you play within the previous structure of 12 teams, did you believe restructure was needed? Drastic dropping to 8 from 12?
- Are there more teams in Scotland that can compete comfortably in SWPL1, 8 enough?
- Are you aware of a better structure employed abroad, possibly from watching the English game or knowing players from abroad? Changes made 8-9-10
- Do you think we play enough games within the structure or could more be added? 28 games 2 away 2 at home?
- Within the league there is criteria which each club must adopt, do you enjoy playing in stadia and the facilities across the country or does this need improved?

### **The SWPL and Cup Season Review**

- What implications has the new structure had for you, the club, fellow players, greater demand placed on your training attendance and additional work?
- How do players feel about balancing employment/studying with training and match schedules?
- Any recommendations you'd like to see to support players better from your experience? This could come from SFA, Club or SWF.
- Having now experienced one season of the new SWPL1, a positive change?
- Repetition an issue? Consistent run of fixtures appreciated, is there enough?
- Concerns attached to the game, player movement, the gap that exists within league?
- Euro 2017 qualification, what's your thoughts on that for this country?
- Cup competitions, a new winner does that give other teams belief.
- Do you play enough cup games? Structures currently in place the correct ones?
- What is your view on a league cup group stage or Scottish cup seeding or champions league style two leg quarter and semi-final?
- Draws now being conducted online, does this lend itself to positive professional development, as a player does that make you proud of what you are involved in?

### **Future Steps**

- What, if any, additional changes would you make to the structure of Scottish women's football?
- I am researching the Scottish game, is there any other part of the game you would like to see documented?

### **Conclusion**

- Thank you for your time, it is greatly appreciated.



## Appendix 10: SWPL 1 Club Criteria

### SWPL 1

#### CRITERIA Checklist

**Team:**

**Home Ground:**

**Person Completing Pro-forma:**

Area	Criteria
1. Personnel a. Coach/Manager	Each club shall have an individual in place. The individual shall be in possession of a job description and contract/agreement outlining their duties which should be a minimum of 20 hours per week. The job holder shall be qualified for the role. The minimum mandatory requirement is as follows: The job holder must have a Level 3 'B' Licence (Adult) Qualification and have applied to start Or has started the Level 4 'A' Licence (Adult) Course.
b. Goalkeeping	In addition clubs must have: A Goalkeeping Coach with a minimum Level 3 Goalkeeping Basic Licence Or Have applied to/started the Level 3 Goalkeeping Basic Licence
c. Physiotherapy	Clubs will have a Physiotherapist present at all games. And Players should have access to a Physiotherapist at least once per week in addition to attendance at matches.
2. The Ground a. The Field of Play	The field shall be in compliance with the Laws of the Game – 98mx63m (as a minimum)
b. Natural Grass Surfaces	Any natural grass surface may be subject to tests, at intervals to be decided by the Scottish FA, to ensure compliance to performance standards determined by the Scottish FA or others approved by the Scottish FA. The field shall be in good condition and playable throughout the playing season.
c. Artificial Surfaces	Standard to be approved by the Scottish FA upon written application from the club.

Standard to be approved by the Scottish FA upon written application from the club.	
1. Facilities a. Teams	<p>The following rooms and facilities, of an equivalent level for both teams, are a minimum requirement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1 dressing room for each club (home and visiting team)</li> <li>- Seating facilities for at least 22 persons</li> <li>- Clothes hanging facilities or lockers for at least 22 persons</li> <li>- 5 showers</li> <li>- 2 seated toilets</li> <li>- Covered bench areas for substitutes</li> </ul>
a. Match Officials	<p>The match official's dressing room must be separate from the team dressing rooms but close by.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Seating facilities for 5 persons.</li> <li>- Clothes hanging facilities or lockers for 5 persons.</li> <li>- 1 shower.</li> <li>- 1 toilet for the sole use of the match officials either in or next to the dressing room itself</li> </ul>
b. Technical Areas	<p>Clubs shall provide a covered seating area next to the field, large enough for the technical team and substitutes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The technical area should extend 1m on either side of the designated seated area and extend forward up to a distance of 1m from the touch line.</li> </ul>
c. Spectators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facility to collect payment from Spectators</li> <li>- Facilities where spectators can get refreshments Tea/coffee etc.</li> <li>- PA system to ensure spectators know who is playing/scorers/ match officials etc.</li> <li>- Match Programmes produced</li> <li>- Team Lines</li> </ul>
a. Level of Cover for Spectators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The minimum level of cover available for both home and away spectators is 200 covered places.</li> <li>- Furthermore, the ground will have a capacity calculated by a competent person in accordance with the Green Guide* (Health and Safety).</li> </ul>
4. First Aid Facilities a. Medical and First Aid Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clubs shall commission a medical risk assessment from a competent person or organisation.</li> </ul>
b. Medical Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From the results of the medical risk assessment, clubs shall have in place a written Medical Plan. This shall include but is not limited to the following</li> </ul>
c. Medical Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A designated first aid room is required. At the very least the facility should have heating and lighting, a supply of hot and cold water as well as drinking water, an accessible toilet facility, a couch with adequate space, a storage facility and a means of communication. The room should be well signposted throughout the ground.</li> </ul>

d. Medical Expertise Provision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is the responsibility of clubs to ensure that an appropriate level of medical expertise is available for its matches. This will be indicated within the Medial Plan</li> </ul>
e. Medical and First Aid Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is the responsibility of each club to ensure that appropriate medical equipment is provided. This will be indicated in the Medical Plan.</li> </ul>
5. Media Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ability to film all of their games with an appropriate structure i.e. raised platform for filming</li> <li>- Production of a professional match sheet</li> <li>- Team lines for media</li> <li>- Wi-Fi access for visiting media</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. It has been suggested that clubs provide a Media Officer who would liaise with reporters etc and ensure they are looked after at matches</b></p>
6. Player Pathway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Clubs should be working towards the creation of an U20 Development Squad for season 2017</li> <li>- Clubs should have a full player pathway. *Clubs will have to be working towards a full player pathway and how this will be done should be shown in their development plan</li> <li>- It is mandatory for all SWPL1 Clubs to have a/n (Under 20 Development Squad) competing in the Development League 2017. There will be scope for overage players in this league. Details to be put in place for 2017</li> </ul>